

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

August

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## JUDGE DREDD



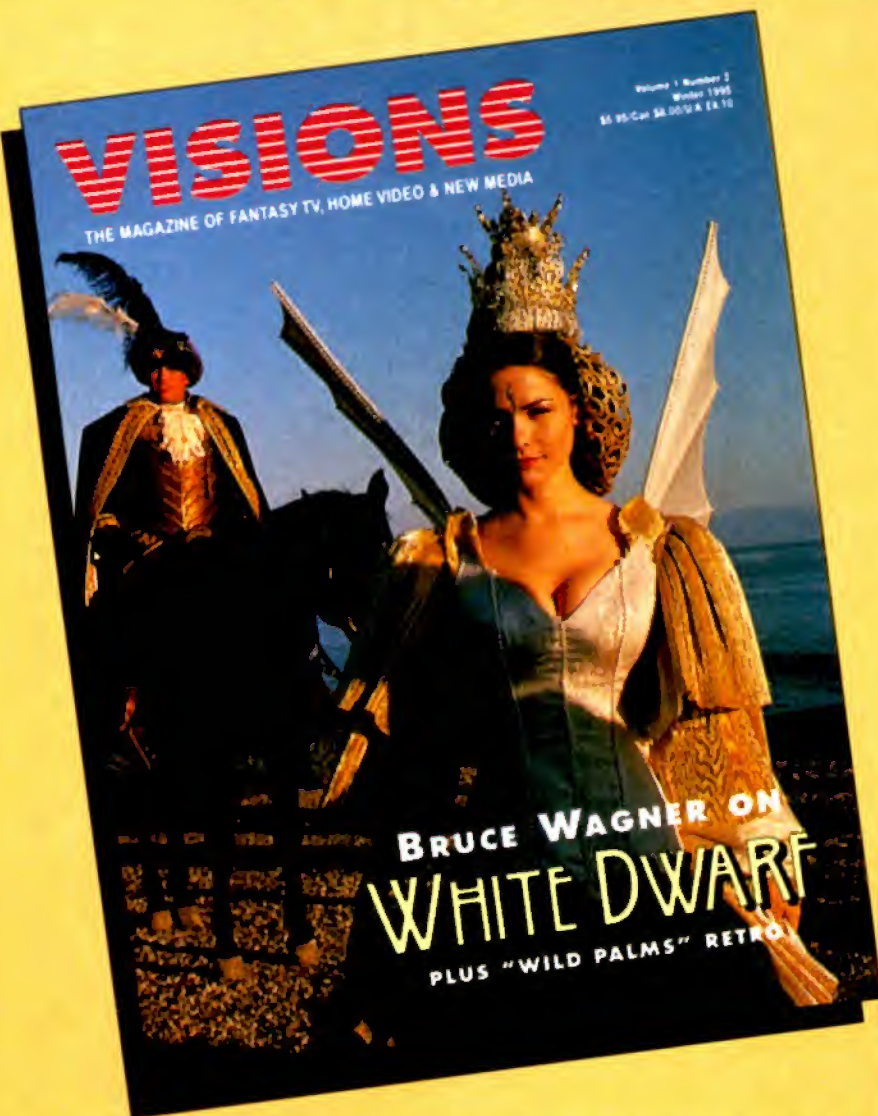
WATERWORLD  
MORTAL KOMBAT  
THE X-FILES  
POCAHONTAS

Sylvester Stallone,  
exploring the politics  
of science ficiton.

Volume 26 Number 5



# NEW MAGAZINES FROM CINEFANTASTIQUE



## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED VISIONS YET?

Now that horror, fantasy and science fiction on television has become part of our American culture, there's finally a magazine devoted to covering the best of the new and classic television fantasies!

*Visions: The Magazine of Fantasy TV, Home Video & New Media*, is born of the minds that brought you *Cinefantastique* and *American Film* magazines. It's the place to turn to for thought-provoking coverage of the latest genre entries on TV, home video and new media, plus in-depth retrospectives of classic fantasy programs. Each issue, our departments—RetroScreen, FutureScreen, CyberScreen and VideoScreen—will keep you in touch with the best of the old and new.

If you missed the premiere issue of *Visions*, then you missed a great cover story on 40 years of Disney television; you missed extensive coverage of the new and classic *OUTER LIMITS*; an exclusive preview of *SPACE*—the new show from the producers of *THE X-FILES*; plus our coverage of MTV's *ODDITIES*, *REBOOT*, "The Mask" CD-ROM; the biggest new titles on home video, tons of reviews and lots more.

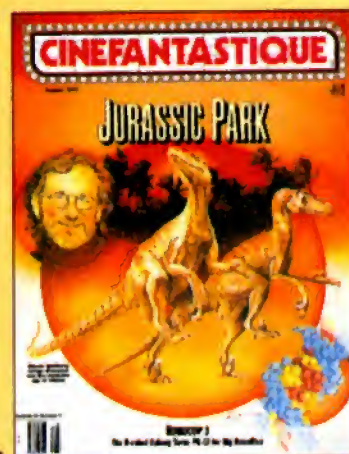
**Don't miss Issue #2.** Our cover story is *WHITE DWARF*, the wild new fantasy program from Oscar-winner Francis Ford Coppola and *WILD PALM*'s creator Bruce Wagner. We have an on-the-set, behind-the-scenes report and interviews with Wagner, the director and actors. *Visions* also talks to Wagner about *WILD PALMS* (which he made with Oscar-winner Oliver Stone). Issue #2 will examine the "Changing Roles of Women in Fantasy Television" from *BEWITCHED* and *I DREAM OF JEANNE* to *EARTH 2* and *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*; plus, the latest CD-ROM releases, home video gems and reviews galore.

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Volume 23 No 4

## COMING NEXT IN IMAGI-MOVIES!

Tired of the same old King? Do you think *STAR TREK*'s drek? Looking for a magazine that brings you in-depth analysis and criticism of the best in science-fiction, fantasy, and horror cinema? Well then, *Imagi-Movies* is just what you're looking for. Over the course of recent issues we have taken our readers back in time to "When Harryhausen Ruled the Earth," to unearth the secrets of Dynamation Dinosaurs, and "Beyond Dracula—into the Realm of the Post-Modern Vampire" to reveal how Anne Rice's *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* overturned cobwebby cliches and revitalized the genre. These and other cover stories, ranging from *WOLF* to *H.R. Giger* to *WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE*, examined their subjects in a way that the competition just can't match, exploring their context and appeal, the background and history that makes the material so fascinating in the first place.

Don't miss our next exhaustive on-the-set report of the making of *BATMAN FOREVER*, starring Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey. Find out how dark the new Dark Knight will be now that Joel Schumacher has taken over the director's reins from Tim Burton, who abandoned the series in favor of making a *CATWOMAN* movie instead. Plus, an extensive look back at *BATMAN RETURNS*, the quirky 1992 sequel that surpassed the stolid original.

Also next issue, the making of *CONGO*, a behind-the-scenes look at adapting Michael Crichton's best-selling lost world adventure to the big screen; "Sequel Mania:" an examination of Hollywood's obsession with roman numerals; retrospectives on the history of Mexican Fantasy Cinema and the career of '50s sci-fi stalwart Beverly Garland; and our usual exhaustive review section on cinema, laser and video.

While striving to remain on the cutting edge of what's new in the genre, we also provide the kind of "Classic Coverage" that serious devotees of the genre have been demanding: reviews of all films in current release; profiles of actors, writers and directors with a proven talent for producing quality work; and retrospectives of the classics that sparked our initial interest in imaginative cinema.

Subscribe to the next four quarterly issues of *Imagi-Movies* for just \$18, a savings of almost \$6 off the newsstand price of \$5.95 and select your rare back issue of *Cinefantastique* from among those pictured and described above and on page 63. Also subscribe to *Visions* and take two!

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The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

AUGUST 1995

Judge who? Comic book fans know JUDGE DREDD as a British comic book institution, as big in England as Batman and Superman are here. Sylvester Stallone and Cinergi film producer Andy Vanja are about to make Dredd a household name in the States when Touchstone Pictures opens their science fiction epic June 30.

London correspondent Alan Jones provides this issue's cover story, after prowling the JUDGE DREDD sets at Shepperton Studios and checking in at the *Dredd* comic book offices of Britain's Fleetway Publications. Dredd is a futuristic super cop that predated ROBOCOP, and Jones delves into the character's comic book roots and the project's long gestation as a feature film, dating back to the time of STAR WARS. His comprehensive on-the-set report of the filming includes interviews with Stallone, Diane Lane, who plays Dredd's distaff colleague Judge Hershey, and comedian Rob Schneider, who talks about duplicating the comic rapport he created with Stallone in DEMOLITION MAN, as Dredd's convict sidekick Fergie. Jones also focuses on the film's behind-the-camera artists, from makeup to design to special effects, including comic book fan turned DREDD-directing auteur, 26-year-old Danny Cannon, whose vision galvanized the production.

Also profiled this issue are a raft of other summer movie diversions. Thomas Doherty speculates on the fate of Kevin Costner's WATERWORLD, Universal's hugely over-budget post-holocaust action epic, which has garnered more bad press than HEAVEN'S GATE. And Glenn Lovell provides an interview with Costner about the reasons behind the film's problems. Bob Garcia looks at MORTAL KOMBAT, the bloody video game that hits movie screens in August, and Douglas Eby previews how the film plans to tone down the violence. And if those summer boxoffice blockbusters should fizzle, there's always TV's X-FILES to catch in re-run. Paula Vitaris takes a look behind-the-scenes at the Golden Globe winner.

Frederick S. Clarke



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**Publisher & Editor:** Frederick S. Clarke. **Bureaus:** New York/ Dan Scapperotti, Dan Persons. **Los Angeles/** Steve Biodrowski. **London/** Alan Jones. **Video:** Anthony Montesano. **Contributors:** Michael Beeler, Thomas Doherty, Dennis Fischer, Robert Garcia, Alan Jones, Judith P. Harris, F. Colin Kingston, Glenn Lovell, Allen Malmquist, Dan Persons, Dan Scapperotti, David Wilt. **Editorial Operations Manager:** Elaine Fiedler. **Editorial Production:** Lisa Tomczak-Walkington. **Production Associate:** Ruth Kopala. **Publisher's Assistant:** Lisa Coduto. **Circulation:** Reva Patterson. **Business Manager:** Celeste Casey Clarke.

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# COMING

By Dan Persons

No, it wasn't a concerted letter-writing campaign orchestrated by infuriated Newt Gingrich fans that got me pulled from the last issue. Late-breaking news on *BATMAN FOREVER* usurped this space. Heh, as if *anyone's* interested in that.

On to cheerier topics...

## OF SWORDS, SORCERERS, AND DUNGEON MASTERS

Okay, so no one will ever mistake *SUPER MARIO BROTHERS* or *STREET FIGHTER* for Shakespeare, but what do you want from films based on worlds where everyone can only move sideways? No, if you want depth in your movie, you need to get depth in your game. Like maybe something where each player must come equipped with a near-encyclopedic knowledge of background material, and gameplay depends more on a person's imaginative skills than on hand-eye coordination. Something where the game materials look more like honest-to-God books than wobbletable sound cards. Something that, as chance would have it, bears more than a passing resemblance to that classic of the role-playing world, *Dungeons and Dragons*.

That's exactly what Courtney Solomon and John Benitz, co-chairmen of the Los Angeles/Hong Kong-based Sweetpea Entertainment, thought. After years of negotiation, the duo—who started their company for the express purpose of producing *DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: THE MOVIE*—was able to swing licensing rights to TSR's profitable game system, and sign on writers Topper Lilien and Carrol Cartwright to do the script. "It was tough getting those rights, never having produced anything on such a large scale," explained Solomon, who has previously worked in numerous capacities in film and TV. "But we came to TSR with a concept that they believed in, and that they believed was right for the movie that they wanted to make for their audience.

"We had a couple of crosses that we had to deal with: one was the existing *Dungeons and Dragons* player, and the other was the mass-market audience that knows nothing about the game at all. We were sort of looking for a mix that would satisfy both markets and make a great movie at the same time. The way we'll do it is to have a

movie that will be completely in the D&D world and be very exciting in that world. At the same time, we knew we couldn't make a foreign world, a world that the audience couldn't relate to. We had to make characters that would be grounded in the 20th century. They have 20th-century problems and 20th-century outlook, but they're in this fantasy world, and you're seeing it through they're eyes, from their perspective."

Solomon refused to reveal any particulars about the plot, save to hint that it will involve a "world-saving quest," and culminate in an airborne battle of dragon armies. *JURASSIC PARK*'s Stan Winston has been brought on to the project (and may be "involved beyond the special effects capacity," Solomon hints); principal photography could start as early as the end of this year. Expect *DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: THE MOVIE* to be a tent-pole release in either the winter of '96, or summer of '97. Time enough for theaters to start stocking heal potions at their concession stands.

Meanwhile, TSR is really on a roll (presumably with a set of 12-sided dice). They've also signed with Canada's Nelvana Communications to produce a feature-length, animated version of their best-selling *Dragonlance* novels, for release in late '96. The film, according to press information, will be packed with "tinker gnomes, curious elves, beautiful ladies and valiant knights," not to mention, "treacherous wizards, evil lords, and powerful dragons." I'm thinking of pitching a sequel that will boast Ever-Ready batteries, Champion spark-plugs, Harlequin romances, Paramount pictures, and Jell-O brand gelatin. Where do I sign?

## APOCALYPSE THEN

If you're going to take up collecting as a

**DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: THE MOVIE.** TSR's role-playing game enters development hell with airborne dragon armies on a world-saving quest.



hobby, might as well do it with some flair. Peter Kuran—he of Visual Concept Entertainment, an effects designer on projects as diverse as *DREAMSCAPE*, *LEGENDS OF THE FALL*, and numerous Michael Jackson videos—has apparently taken that philosophy to heart. No stamps, matchbooks, or celebrity hand-towels for him. Peter collects the Bomb.

Or footage of it, anyway—film clips of mushroom clouds, shock waves, and decimated landscapes; shots retrieved from federal archives and military vaults, some so rare that their declassification came only upon his request. Begun some ten years ago as an experiment in government access, the hobby bloomed last year into a full-fledged film project. Come July 16—the 50th anniversary of the first A-bomb test, code-named Trinity—the 90-minute documentary feature, *TRINITY AND BEYOND*, will have its debut.

"Having worked on *DREAMSCAPE*," explained Kuran, "I was exposed to some of the nuclear weapons footage, and I wanted to find the best possible footage I could. I wanted to see how far I could go into various defense archives and be able to get to the most pristine generation of footage—just as an exercise. I'd gotten some books and documents from the government on various projects, and within these documents they talked about the photographic aspects of all of the nuclear weapons. Knowing a lot about motion picture work, I could put the information together and figure out what this material was, and in what shape it should be, and how clean it was.

"I've been working on it for a year. It's a very time-consuming thing; it's time-consuming in the sense that you can work with an archive that is very responsive to your needs and can get your request researched. Some places are *really* slow: you have to know what you're looking for, you have to ask for it and then you may not get it for two months. And in some cases where something has to be declassified, that, in itself, may take two months to happen."

In addition to the archival footage, Kuran has fortified the film with CGI sequences created to bridge gaps in the visual information, and with interviews with such authors of contemporary history as Dr. Edward Teller. As a plus, Kuran claims that his efforts at restoring long-shelved footage has re-

# ATTRACTIONS

sulted in the development of an optical system that can elevate aged footage to the level of an IB Technicolor print for less money than is demanded by conventional systems (\$100,000 per feature for Kuran's process, as opposed to the current \$3 to \$4 million). So, in a sense, the ultimate instrument of death has given rise to a kind of rebirth. Think of it as yet another peace dividend.

## TRAILERS

Ah, the pleasures of a long deadline! By the time the last installment of *Coming Attractions* ran, the Spielberg/Katzenberg/ Geffen partnership mentioned here had hammered out a business plan and decided on a name. The new studio will henceforth be known as DreamWorks SKG. Expect the first feature effort sometime in '96, with the studio building up to full production speed by 1999... More news we wish we had waited a week for. Last time, as you remember, we were celebrating the fact that TriStar's *GODZILLA* was still on track, with *SPEED* director Jan de Bont heading up the effort. Wellll...guess what? Things aren't looking so rosy, now. Seems de Bont saw the CGI-enhanced remake as running close to \$130 million, while TriStar, no doubt remembering sibling Columbia's *LAST ACTION HERO*, wanted to keep the budget down to the \$100 million neighborhood. The director walked, and is currently being offered his choice of projects over at Fox, amongst them, a remake of *THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE*... One more update: we previously said John Travolta was looking to play the lead in the film adaptation of L. Ron Hubbard's *Fear*. This, according to Travolta's representatives, was not true, and was in fact based on a widespread rumor that assumed that the Scientologist actor would naturally wish to appear in a film based on his mentor's work. This is tantamount to assuming that Woody Allen would be anxious to play the lead in *THE HENRY KISSINGER STORY*. Guess again...

*GODZILLA*, by the way, has not managed to crush TriStar's interest in genre projects. The company has picked up the rights to *Rim: A Novel of Virtual Reality*, Alexander Beshner's tale of a cyberspace detective sent into the depths of a mal-



**APOCALYPSE THEN**, authentic A-Bomb footage collected for a documentary by Visual Concept Entertainment effects expert Peter Kuran for telecast July 19.

functioning Web to attempt a desperate rescue mission. Film will be produced by Blue Wolf Productions... You should have such troubles: No sooner had the production team at Disney's *GARGOYLES* gotten their expanded, 13 episode season under way than top brass decided to expand production again, this time to a full 65 half-hours. The well-received, animated dramatic-action series will shift to a daily schedule in the fall... In France, the time-travel farce *LES VISITEURS*—about a 12th-century knight transported to present day—broke boxoffice records. But comedy is notoriously difficult to transport overseas (see under: Yahoo Serious), so what is a savvy distributor like Miramax to do? Simple: hire Mel Brooks to re-dub the film for American audiences. The *WHAT'S UP, TIGER LILY?* approach may just work, if only Mel can resist the urge to transpose the word "pate" to the less-syncable "chopped liver"... What else are they doing in Europe? Consider *FELIDAE*, an animated feature from Germany in which cats play detective and, when it comes to romance, surrender a certain amount of their anthropomorphic charm in order to do it the way cats have been doing it for millennia. Maybe the producers can avoid an NC-17 by convincing the MPAA that the thing's an educational treatise on animal husbandry...

It's the number-one show in Japan. It's bested the likes of *MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS* in Hong Kong,

France, and Spain. Now, *SAILOR MOON*, the Japanese animated series about a heart-breakingly leggy teenage girl turned somewhat reluctant super-hero, is coming to the U.S., courtesy of Dic Entertainment. The series will run as a daily strip, starting in the fall. Any show that can roll the Rangers has my whole-hearted support... Revivals! We've got revivals! Big revivals, small revivals, revivals that are going to cost a lot of money. Looking for a little retro-comedy? How about Disney's remake of *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR*, possibly with Tim Allen starring? No? Maybe you like your academics just plain nutty, as in *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR*, with Eddie Murphy? Not working for ya, huh? Okay, try a live-action version of *THE JETSONS*, from Turner Pic-

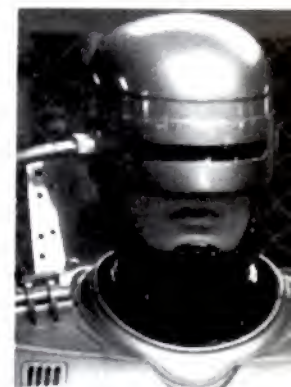
tures, or maybe even a similarly live *SCOOBY-DOO, WHERE ARE YOU?* from the same company. Okay, okay, I'll stop. Sheesh, you people are hard to please... Dust off your *Cliff Notes*: New Regency Productions is bringing Milton's "Paradise Lost"—the epic poem depicting the fall of Adam and Eve—to the screen, with a script by Brian Daly. Can't wait to see the action figures at my local Toys 'R' Us.

## IN MEMORIUM

A moment of silence, please, for Officer Alex Murphy, a.k.a. RoboCop. Rysher TPE, the American syndicator of *THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT* TV show, has decided not to renew the series for a second season, thus guaranteeing ol' Murphy a one-way trip to the scrap heap. I'd weep, but given the mediocre quality of *ROBOCOPS 2* and *3*, the cartoon show that couldn't scrape it together to even crack the New York market, and weekly live-action episodes that wavered distressingly between Gibson-noir and *BATMAN*-camp, this can only be seen as a mercy-killing. Robo, we hardly knew ye.

## IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY...

Somebody, please, pull the Puttermans' batteries! □



# WATERWORLD

**Universal's gazillion dollar SF epic sails to a multiplex port near you.**

*By Thomas Doherty*

When Universal sails its gazillion dollar science fiction epic WATERWORLD into a multiplex port near you—the scheduled release date is mid-July—expect a raft of hydraulic metaphors to drip from the pens of Siskels and Joe Bobs everywhere. References to oceanic expense, leviathan size, and rivers of red ink will cling like barnacles to the most expensive and publicly troubled motion picture spectacular since HEAVEN'S GATE (1980). From the start of production in July 1994, rumors (leaks?) in the motion picture trade press have chronicled bad omens: Pentagon-sized cost overruns, desperate and drunken antics by below-the-line members of the crew, sunken sets, and a location shoot from hell in Hawaii. "Incorporating thrilling action sequences, revolutionary production design, and dynamic visual effects, WATERWORLD will take audiences into a world they have never seen before," counter the advance publicity faxes from Universal. Maybe—but whatever ultimately surfaces on the screen, on the page WATERWORLD reads like THE ROAD WARRIOR with chlorine.

The film opens with a clever visual hook: the camera moves in on Universal's familiar planet Earth logo and the blue of the oceans swells to swallow up the green of the continents. Ecological catastrophe being to the '90s what nuclear armageddon

**"In action movies they like to have people flying around," said Costner. "I've tried to infuse a story into it, to make the film more than just that."**



Kevin Costner as the Mariner in post-holocaust action that reads like THE ROAD WARRIOR with chlorine, a hard-sell for Universal come July.

was to the '50s, the setting is an environmentally challenged futureworld, presumably flooded after the polar icecaps have been melted by global warming. Engulfing the line of sight, the screen is a vast expanse of water, water everywhere—until a web-footed mariner (Kevin Costner) emerges from the sea. He sails the endless ocean in a jaunty trimaran and, to keep afloat economically, scavenges the ocean bottom for late 20th-century junk.

The only solid surfaces in WATERWORLD are makeshift atolls, Sargasso Sea-like isles comprised of barges and driftwood that support a BEYOND THUNDERDOME decor and a ramshackle populace living off the corpse of the old world. Dirt is a precious commodity, fresh water a delectable nectar. Bereft of sun block and vitamin C, the Atollers are a scurvy and suspicious bunch, save for a beauty among the beasts named Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn) and her

adopted feral child Enola (Tina Marjorino). With charcoal or crayon, the precocious Enola doodles compulsively, but the girl's most intriguing feature is a strange tattoo on the back of her neck in the shape of a celestial map. It is the MacGuffin that may unlock the secret to the (mythical?) Dryland, a legendary terra firma somewhere over the blue horizon.

When the Atollers find out the Mariner is part fish bait (a "mute-o"), they sentence him to death by drowning in the primordial ooze of the Organo Barge, a local ritual interrupted by WATERWORLD's main hazard to public safety, the Smokers. Cruising the saline surface on jet skis and speedboats, the Smokers are marauding bands of low-IQ pirates, sort of Hell's Angels without concrete. The really deranged Smokers are called Berserkers, who careen through the air on water skis and function as flying bombs. The Smoker/Berserker attack on the Atoll is a blizzard of action-adventure rape and pillage—water cannons, spear guns, and bombs (and berserkers) bursting in air. Playing Lord Humongous to these warriors of the waste is the Deacon of the Deez (Dennis Hopper), a demon-eyed baddie with a flair for the regal gesture (he tosses Marlboros to his acolytes) and crude witticisms ("The gentleman guppy. He's like a turd that won't flush.").

The Mariner, Helen, and Enola escape and gradually, predictably, the mariner's re-



In our environmentally challenged future, the polar ice caps have melted to engulf the world in water. Above: The Deez, a floating scrapheap ruled by Dennis Hopper. Inset: Setting the post-holocaust scene: the view from space.



sentiment and distrust of the woman and child coalesce into the mutual affection of a proto-nuclear family. But the Deacon of the Deez, as obsessed with the literal promised land as everyone else, needs Enola's epidermal Rand McNally to lead his troops to Dryland. He captures the map-imprinted child and brings her to his supertanker lair ("the Deez") to decipher her tattoo. Now, the Mariner must decide whether to fish or cut bait—to abandon Helen and the surviving Atollers or to lead a suicidal assault on the Deez and rescue the little girl, the hope of hu-and-mer-mankind.

If to give away too much more would be downright churlish, to speculate further on the final cut from the screenplay alone would be truly stupid. So here goes. Visually, the script invites the juxtaposition of the junkyard grunge of the Atolls and the cavernous supertanker with the pristine, solid blue, and all-encompassing ocean. Expect periodic cameo appearances, a la the Statue of Liberty in *PLANET OF THE APES*, from the flotsam and jetsam of earth life *apres le deluge*. Almost certainly the film will be shot in widescreen Panavision to capture the vast horizons of emptiness, with the camera's line of

sight hugging the waterline and rolling with the waves. Applying the rule of thumb of about 60 seconds of screen time per page of screenplay, the running time should clock in at around two hours, but given the packed action per scene (and the understandable desire to see the money up on screen), the film will be lucky to unspool at 150 minutes. The violence quotient is far more extreme than the mild scene of interspecies sex between the Mariner and Helen, so the ratings game will be played out on the cusp between PG-13 and R, with the price tag arguing for compliance with any MPAA-mandated editing necessary to get the PG-13 imprimatur—a film this costly can't afford to forbid admission to kids too timid to sneak past an usher. One possible problem area: the child Enola is placed in jeopardy and maltreated by the Deacon in a rather unpleas-

ant interrogation scene that may well be toned down, or cut, from the final version.

Above and below the line, the screen credits for *WATERWORLD* are estimable enough: directed by Kevin Reynolds (whom Costner locked horns with on *ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES*); written by Peter Rader (his first credit) and David Twohy (*WARLOCK*), with script doctoring from veteran Marc Norman (*THE KILLER ELITE*, *BAT-21*); cinematography by Dean Semler (Oscar winner for *DANCES WITH WOLVES*), and production design by Dennis Gassner (*BUGSY*). Yet whatever the glory of the effects or the pedigree of the back-up behind the camera, Kevin Costner will have to carry this thing home on his shoulders. Since Costner hasn't had an authentic blockbuster since *THE BODYGUARD* (1992), the actor's

Dennis Hopper as the Deacon of Deez, obsessed with finding the promised Dryland while scavenging the ocean bottom for precious 20th-century junk.



# WATERWORLD

## KEVIN COSTNER, AUTEUR

*Adding a message to the mayhem proved costly.*

By Glenn Lovell

The hair is sun-bleached, shoulder-length and gangled. The eyes are tired, red-rimmed. The attire *du jour*: Robinson Crusoe casual (t-shirt, faded jeans, running shoes). Even the die-hard fan would have to concede Kevin Costner looks a wreck today. In fact, he looks like something that has just washed ashore. He's not so much waterlogged, he apologized, as WATERWORLD-logged. The future-world adventure, shot mostly on the Big Island of Hawaii, has been, he freely admits, a logistical nightmare. Tropical storms, tidal-wave alerts, swamped sets, plus his own personal problems (an acrimonious split with wife of 16 years, Cindy Silva), have conspired to turn this post-apocalyptic hybrid of ROAD WARRIOR and DC Comics' *Aquaman* into what industry wags are calling "Kevin's Gate."

Costner, 39, is hopping mad that WATERWORLD, sight unseen, is already being buried at sea. Though hired as star (to fulfill a "contractual obligation



Traversing WATERWORLD on his jaunty trimaran, Costner plays the classic loner, forced to fight off jet-ski attackers (inset) called "Smokers," marauding bands of low-IQ pirates who live off the corpse of the old world, Hell's Angels on aqua.



that came due"), he has taken a "more active role as nuts-and-bolts producer." He freely admitted his thumbprint is on every page of a problematic script (by Marc Norman from a Peter Rader-David Twohy story). Originally, the film was "only an action-adventure *situation*." Costner believes he has given it texture, a classic dramatic structure.

"We're obsessed with judging things before we even see them," he complained during a press sendoff for another Universal release, THE WAR. "The obligation of this movie will be to be good. Because it's very expensive, the obligation also will be to have universal appeal. The only way I know how to make a film do well is to work on it, to try to make it as thoughtful and smart as possible. I know better than anyone on this plane what has happened on WATERWORLD. The only thing I can't do is run away from the responsibility of it. I can't do that. And I won't do that. If it's going to land square on me, so be it."

Costner confirmed there have been significant delays and cost overruns. But enough to carry the late-summer release to a bank-breaking \$160 million as some have reported? (After marketing and print costs, the *L.A. Times* reported this figure could balloon to \$200 million making WATER-

WORLD the most expensive film of all time.)

"I don't know," Costner shrugged. "It could cost \$140 million." Does this worry him, especially after WYATT EARP? George Lucas, conducting interviews just down the hall (for RADIOLAND MURDERS) has singled out WATERWORLD and other costly Costner titles as examples of what's wrong with moviemaking today. Lucas' alternative: less money, more imagination.

"I think George is right," said Costner. "But some movies, by their very nature, are going to cost more. It would be

[scary] if it was my money in WATERWORLD. Actually some of it *is* mine. I've put my own money into movies more than anyone else. I own negatives. I know what it's like to meet a budget. I think this movie has a chance to bring [the producers'] money back because it is very commercial."

Costner went further. He called his nautical odyssey a "crowd-pleaser. That's not to cheapen it. It's an adventure. It's a sit-in-your-seat-and-go-for-a-ride. It's the first movie I've ever done like that. I'm trying to get my imprint on what I think a good adventure movie is. Trying to put something [meaty] inside the action."

The mangled spires and cages on which mankind in the future cling to in the film's floating scrapheaps brings to mind earlier allegorical stand-offs like PLANET OF THE APES and MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME. "The people who have sur-

Costner finds romance on the seas in the form of Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn) whose feral child holds the key to a mythical Dryland over the blue horizon.





**“I’m trying to get my imprint on what I think is a good adventure,” said Costner. “I’m trying to put something meaty inside all of that action.”**

bankability stock has a lot riding on the project (despite solid work in *A PERFECT WORLD*, *WYATT EARP*, and *THE WAR*). In a film world that just seems to get dumber and dumber, he’s played it very smart—which is one reason the bad luck and logistic trouble plaguing the production of *WATERWORLD* so rattled the film industry. His interior intelligence and warm screen presence will be a necessary balance to the furious fireworks of the strange new world. The part is made to order: the Mariner is cut from the cloth of a thousand Hollywood silent types, men whose harsh exterior conceals a heart of mush.

Dennis Hopper will turn in a doozy of a performance as the Deacon of the Deez, but his Frank Booth-on-ether routine is getting a little long in the tooth—when he’s using the character to sell Nikes in football ads, we know we’re moved from villainy to parody. Tripplehorn’s character is a cipher—she’s the Girl, a love-interest appendage evincing little of the strength of a James Cameron woman. The other girl—child actress Tina Marjorino—is an unknown quantity, but precocious kids wear thin fast in science fiction. (Remember the brat from *THE LAST ACTION HERO*?)

The other hurdle the film has to clear is rampant pre-release prejudice. Critical snipers are already waiting to blow it out of the water for its wastrel ways. Even in a town where Stallone gets \$20 million up front, the profligate spending on *WATERWORLD* is bracing. At a reported \$165 million price tag, the film’s budget almost exactly matches the annual federal expenditure for the National Endowment for the Arts. To read the screenplay with a producer’s eye for the bottom line is to get a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach. The scale of the proj-

ect is Homeric. Whether the on-screen action is ultimately breathtaking or bloated, it will surely be cluttered and frenzied: a mammoth exterior and interior set for the supertanker the Deez, two or three Atoll villages, veritable armadas of speedboats, barges, jet skiers, and flying berserkers, complicated underwater and aerial shots, one transforming trimaran, one dirigible, one Deaconmobile, countless fireballs and explosions, and a cast of dozens of stuntmen. Since a Hollywood motion picture needs to gross two and a half times its negative cost to turn a profit, not counting prints and publicity, for *WATERWORLD* to break into the black, everyone who went to *JURASSIC PARK* will have to take his parents. No wonder the only guy smiling on the set was the fellow with the Malox concession.

How the film fares at the box office is the \$165 million question. Bad memories of James

*continued on page 61*

**Costner’s gillman, a mute traveller of the seas armed only with a speargun and a yen to live in peace.**



**Entering the Deez, Hopper’s makeshift atoll with MAD MAX decor, the Hawaiian set from Hell that was a budget-buster for Universal.**

It sounds like Costner is describing Universal’s next theme-park ride. “There easily could be a ride in this,” he said, warming to the idea. “I could design one in my sleep. A lot of times people ask me on a creative level about that kind of thing. I’ll sit for 10 minutes and think about it. I’d be fooling myself if I didn’t think merchandising was a part of it.”

Bottom line? Despite the media’s Monday-morning quarterbacking, *WATERWORLD* will be worthwhile and different. It will most likely be rated PG-13 and not resort to the kind of numbing violence for which Schwarzenegger and Stallone are known.

“It can’t be judged in a way a lot of movies I’ve done have been judged,” said Costner. “I’ve tried to infuse a story into it. I’ve tried to make it more than people shooting each other and flying around, although I’m learning in these action-adventure movies they like people flying around.”

In one scene, Costner recalled, it was Mariner up against 50 bad guys. “What do I do? They [the producers] go, ‘Well, you shoot them all.’ Really? Is that how they do it? I said, ‘Thank God, I’ve only got one speargun here. I’m going to have to be a little more resourceful.’” □

vived are on their last legs,” said Costner. “Everything is falling apart, deteriorating. The world is in a very desperate strait. So, we’re at the end of another era.”

Costner’s character, Mariner, is part Shane, part Moses, part amphibian. “My character is a loner, the classic drifter who’s one step ahead on the evolutionary chain—or behind. However one wants to look at it,” said Costner. “He still has a need for people, but he’s very efficient at being by himself. He can survive, but the rest of the people won’t. So he gets caught up in their desperation. The plot unfolds with him, the woman and the child, and these kind of eco-pigs looking for them. It’s pretty fun.”

PLANET OF THE APES producer Arthur P. Jacobs once described his dream project, the never-shot *JOURNEY OF THE AQUANAUTS*, as “2001 underwater.” Costner explained the difference of *WATERWORLD*’s epic story. “We’re not so much under water as on top of it,” he said. “It’s not as Jules Verne-y. It’s hard to get your hands around it. The characters are exotic and the places are exotic, but it doesn’t have that kind of fantastic quality. It’s fantastic in another way.”

# WH

## Bruce Wagner

By F. Colin Kingston

What happens when two of Hollywood's most creative people join forces for a television pilot? When those two people are Francis Ford Coppola (DRACULA) and Bruce Wagner (WILD PALMS) the result is WHITE DWARF, one of the most imaginative pilots of this or any television season. Fox TV aired the TV-movie May 23.

Coppola serves as co-executive producer along with Wagner, who also serves as creator, writer, and actor. Wagner plays a convicted felon who is executed during the pilot.

WHITE DWARF combines so many different elements it is impossible to place it in one particular genre. It is one part science fiction, one part fantasy and one part fairy tale. Said Wagner, "It is essentially a doctor show, but it takes place in this mystical landscape."

The cast includes renowned actor Paul Winfield (STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN, TERMINATOR) as Akada, a mystical healer with a violent and troubled past; Neal McDonough (DARKMAN, ANGELS IN THE OUTFIELD) as Driscoll, a recent medical school graduate who is as arrogant and pompous as he is talented; C.C.H. Pounder (ROBOCOP III, LIFEPOD) as Shabana, nurse and confidante to Akada; and Ele Keats (ALIVE, THE ROCKETEER) as Princess Ariel, the potential love interest of Driscoll.

The background and plot lines for WHITE DWARF are quite complicated, much more so than the average television pilot. The pilot takes place on the planet Rusta and is set some time in the distant future. One half of the planet is always light; the other dark. Much of the pilot takes place in a small medical clinic run by Akada (Winfield) on the light side of the planet.

Noted Wagner, "We created a world that is separated by a wall that is almost like the Great Wall of China. It is a world divided in the middle." As it turns out, Akada's services are very much needed because the light and dark side of Rusta are engaged in a civil war.

Wagner explained the planet's continual light and darkness this way: "These things called regulators hang in the sky and control the climate," he said. "We have things called light storms and dark storms because



Osh, the reptilian warden of the Keep, makeup by Michael Burnett. Below: A dark side cultist/assassin. Wagner's pilot is a coproduction with Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope, filmed in Simi Valley.



# ITE DWARF

## on writing science fiction for television.

the regulators are sort of on the fritz. They were built by people who are no longer here."

Winfield's character has an interesting background. "He [Akada] was born on the dark-side. He used to be a warrior. Now he is a healer. He has spent 20 years in jail. He is not exactly a Mandela but he has come out not bitter and certainly not revengeful."

As to what crimes his character committed, Winfield said, "All the script says is that he committed terrible, terrible crimes. I assume that is mayhem and murder. He wasted many lives. I would think that is probably what made him get into saving lives."

Wagner elaborated, "Akada spent a lot of time in prison for his political acts and when he was released he was released onto the light side of the planet. Akada underwent a kind of weird tutelage while he was in prison. He is unlike any television doctor we have ever seen."

Driscoll (Neal McDonough) comes to the clinic to complete a Peace Corp-type mission. "Driscoll is very arrogant," Wagner explained. "In fact, he comes to this place sort of happily because in his mind he is going to write his memoirs. One of his lines in the show is, 'Every Park Avenue doctor worth his salt has war stories to tell about doing his internship in the out-back.'"

Driscoll also has a tragic past. "When he [Driscoll] was on Earth in medical school he gave something to his wife and son that he caught from a cadaver. His wife and son died," said Wagner.

McDonough explains that Driscoll receives a rude awakening soon after he arrives on Rusta. "Basically Driscoll is just this pompous young intern. Akada sees how green he is from the beginning. Paul totally plays into it."

Like many good actors, McDonough speaks of Driscoll as if he were speaking of himself. "I couldn't cure anything out there," he said. "Finally, I fail miserably in

**"Essentially, it's a doctor show," said Wagner, "but it's set in this mystical landscape, a planet separated by a great wall that divides it in half."**



Driscoll (Neal McDonough) a medical school graduate befriends Princess Ariel (Ele Keats) in the ambitious Fox-TV movie pilot produced by Wagner.

this one operation. Someone dies in my hands and Paul reassures me that I can be a good doctor if I concentrate and I practice. I open up as a human being to him."

The cast also includes Joey Andrews (ON OUR OWN, SLEEPSTALKER) as Never, a young boy with a mysterious disease who resides at the clinic; Chip Heller as Osh, the prison warden; John Dennis Johnston as Morgus, his trusted aide who is slowly "devolving" into something similar to a Rottweiler.

Of the prison Wagner said, "The place is called 'The Keep' and it is run by this monstrous warden named Osh. Osh is a reptilian creature. He injects people with something that allows them to serve 5,000-year sentences."

One of those serving a 5,000-year sentence is Lady X (Kathy Boyer). "I have a special feeling for Lady X," said Wagner of his creation. "She has been falsely accused

of smuggling some substance to the states that wound up killing a billion people, and she gets this 5,000-year sentence. Her warden has fallen in love with her over the hundreds of years yet he's this monstrous-looking creature."

Osh's right-hand man and confidant is named Morgus. "The prison is really run by Keep Hounds," said Wagner. "They are these horrible dogs. Morgus is extremely scholarly and intelligent but he is like half-Rottweiler half-man. His tragedy is that he is slowly devolving into one of the Keep Hounds. Osh knows that within a 100 years or so Morgus will be one of these Keep Hounds who actually execute prisoners."

The characters who inhabit the clinic are equally as tragic. Joey Andrews plays Never, a boy who has a disease called Proteus Syndrome. "They call him Never because he shifts into other creatures," said Wagner. "His mother has him warehoused at the clinic. She doesn't even live on this planet so he is alone, living at the hospital."

Never's shapeshifting immediately causes problems for Driscoll. Upon Driscoll's arrival Never innocently taps into Driscoll's subconscious and morphs into Driscoll's dead wife. Wagner related, "She says, 'Why did you kill me?'" Driscoll is totally flipped out."

Also living at the clinic are 11-year-old twin girls, XaXa (Tara Graham) and XuXu (Beverly Mitchell). Orphaned in the beginning of the pilot, one of them has a disease that makes her look like she is 70 years old.

"Michael Burnett is our special effects guy who is just unbelievable," said Wagner. "He created this latex face for her. She slips into latex gloves that are veiny and old but she has the spark in her eye of an 11-year-old."

Oscar-winning costume designer Theodora Van Runkel brings a variety of looks and styles to the project. "To get a

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# LORD OF

## Writer-director Clive Barker on fine-tuning

By Michael Beeler

Clive Barker's most recent sojourn into the land of Hollywood has not been without its share of troubles, doubts and wonderful wisps of fancy. Barker, well known for his creatively bizarre and richly graphic violent books, movies and art work, harnessed himself to the almost impossible task of directing his eagerly awaited screenplay *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*, at the same time he was producing two of his sequels, *CANDYMAN II*, which opened in March, and *HELLRAISER IV*, due for release in September. United Artists has decided to open Barker's *LORD OF ILLUSIONS* August 8th.

*LORD OF ILLUSIONS* was originally slated for a February release but held back because of some unfavorable audience pre-screenings and what was regarded by many as an unrealistically tight post-production schedule. "We were between a rock and a hard place," admitted Barker, who was recently dubbed Grand Master by The Horror Writers of America in Atlanta, Georgia. "We had tested [*LORD OF ILLUSIONS*] and it was not where everybody wanted it to be, myself included. We needed to go back and tighten some things up to make it better. What I was really nervous about was that the picture would not be quite where I wanted it to be and that UA would say, 'Well, let's put it out anyway.' There was a debate about that."

Much of the discussion between Barker and UA centered around the importance of missing the original February 17th window for release. The studio liked the date because it was a three-day weekend. Barker felt that a lot of time and creative energy had already been put into the film using what he termed, "every hour that God sent and a few the Devil sent too," and he felt like they were going to drop the ball just because they had a little window in their head about where the movie should be put.

Noted Barker, "[United Artists] went away, thought about it and came back with

**"It's important to sit in a movie with an audience and listen to their response," said Barker. "You get a sense of what moves them and makes them jump."**



Barker on the set earlier this year with Scott Bakula, who plays supernatural detective Harry D'Amour, tracking down a magician with real magic powers.

the very happy news: yes they would give me the extra time and yes I could finish off the picture, polishing it the way I wanted to. [United Artists] also gave us some additional money, mostly for some extra special effects, which we were happy to use."

A month later, after tweaking the final sequence of the film and adding some additional effects, the movie was tested again. This time out, "the audience went ape shit," said a visibly excited Barker. "It was a completely different kind of screening. The numbers doubled, which I don't necessarily believe in, but as far as the studio was concerned that was very important. Very important as far as their confidence was concerned. They came away from it beaming from ear to ear saying, 'This is great! These are the numbers we wanted. This is the movie we wanted.' And, by the way, the movie I wanted too. So, I felt pretty good about that."

Barker felt that the audience's more favorable response to the second screening was largely due to the fact that the first

screening didn't have a musical score, a lot of the special effects or any of the sound effects in. Explained Barker, "Basically we were showing the world a pretty naked picture. And, the response was by no means negative. There were a lot of people who really liked the picture. They just liked it a lot more when everything was in place. The score, the effects, the sound effects and the ADR make such a damn difference to the picture. This is part of the problem with testing special effects movies before the special effects are in. It's a really tough way to get a sense of whether the movie is working for the audience or not."

The process of audience testing of movies is not new for Barker. The first *CANDYMAN*'s ending was changed because of testing. *CANDYMAN II* was tested several times, as was *NIGHTBREED*, *HELLRAISER II* and *III*. The first *HELLRAISER* was never tested because as Barker admitted, "it was so minor and small, that frankly nobody gave a shit."

Barker is both familiar with the process of prescreening his movies and very comfortable with it. "I know there are filmmakers who say, 'Oh, it's a completely worthless procedure,'" said Barker. "Although I don't think the numbers are that important, what I do think is important is sitting in a cinema with an audience and listening to them respond to the movie. It is possible to find out where they're jumping, where they're laughing, where they're moved and where they're bored. You just get a sense for the whole movie by instinctively getting a feeling from the audience around you."

United Artists briefly toyed with the idea of a May opening, but shied away from competition with mega-budgeted movies such as *DIE HARD III*, *CONGO* and *CRIMSON TIDE*. "All those movies cost upwards of \$60 or \$70 million," lamented Barker. "And, good as our movie is, I just thought we'd be trampled to death in that kind of company. So, we decided to wait until those guys had run their spectacular

# ILLUSIONS

**the horror magic act during post-production.**

course and toward the end of the summer, probably in August, when they've basically done their business, we can come out with our picture. Though I think that is a very sensible course, I'm a little frustrated because I want the world to see my movie! I'm very excited about it. I've geared myself up for showing [LORD OF ILLUSIONS] to the world earlier than this and now I have to be a little patient."

Although Barker's spirit was always willing throughout the seemingly endless process of nurturing the three diverse movie projects at once, it was clear as the months passed that the flesh was indeed weak. "My enthusiasm never ran out, but God, my energy took a dive," said Barker. "But, I don't know anybody who directs movies, who wouldn't say that about the filmmaking process. It's almost a universal truth. Particularly if you've written the thing and you're also producing or co-producing, as I was in this case. A lot of responsibility lies on your shoulders and we were really trying to push the envelope on the genre. I mean, we weren't talking about a guy with an axe in a dark house. We were putting things on the screen things that hadn't been seen before and nuances that hadn't been felt before and that means you've got to be watching really, really closely and working really, really hard to pull off something fresh, without all the money in the world.

"The good news about this is that the movie is strange and tough and dark. I guarantee you've never seen a horror movie like this. That was always my stated intention. We talked about that right from the very beginning: give audiences something they haven't seen before. The challenge of that is that you can't fall back on the tried-and-true. You can't sit back and say, 'Well, ok we'll do this whole section of the movie like George Romero would.' I couldn't sit there and say to my DP, 'Ok, well you know this stuff, it's been done here, here and here.' We were constantly trying to make it fresh and new. And, that uses up your energy. It uses up your imagination, it uses up your wits. At the end of the day I was literally looking at three sets of dailies."



Daniel Von Barga as Nix, Barker's LORD OF ILLUSIONS, levitating in for the kill. United Artists plans to open the eagerly awaited shocker nationwide August 18, vying for summer business.

In the midst of all this, Barker was also advising Paramount Pictures and Kennedy/Marshall productions on turning his THE THIEF OF ALWAYS into an animated feature. "This is a new one for me so I'm learning as I go," said Barker. "I'm such a fan of animated features and just totally enjoying watching these people turn my work into something wonderful. I think the release is going to be Halloween 1996."

Maintaining an unbelievable work schedule both on the film sets and in the editing studios, Barker gained an almost mythical reputation as an omnipresent machine that required neither sleep nor food. Barker tried to downplay such remarks by outlining a number of things he tried to do to maintain a high energy level. "I drink indecently large amounts of caffeinated tea,"

said Barker. "I think that's the Brit in me. But, I'm always looking for anything that can give me a kick in the pants. On the sets I could be seen chewing ginseng at various times.

"I picked up this thing about snoozing from [David] Cronenberg, who actually has built into his shooting schedule a nap time for himself and I guess any of the other crew who want to avail themselves of it. For me that's really important. I always have a siesta during the days I'm writing. I think current medical opinion is that it's actually supposed to be better for us than we ever thought. Siestas are actually very healthy. You know, 10 or 15 minutes is all I need. I catnap; I close my eyes and 15 minutes later I'm definitely more awake and more focused than I was before the nap. I also exercise. I work out at the gym four times a week when we're shooting. I think that's useful."

Ultimately, Barker regards well thought out planning and organization as the salvation of all his projects whenever he is deep within the fray of the ensuing battle. "The analogy has been made by directors over the years that the moviemaking experience tends to be fairly apocalyptic," said Barker. "You know you feel as if you're either tied to the tracks with a train coming at you 200 miles an hour or you're actually on the 200-mile-an-hour train heading for a brick wall. Whatever it is, it's always about the sense of time and urgency: can I do that, can I do this within budget or can this be done in the time scale?"

"I'm sitting here now, writing my next book. The movies are done, CANDY-MAN II is out and THIEF is doing very nicely. It's all proceeding on its way, but in the middle of it, you cannot see the wood for the trees. And, that's when you're glad you organized the thing and when you're glad that you did the preproduction sketches and storyboards, because at least that means on a Monday morning when your head is turned to custard, you can at least look at the storyboards and say, 'Ah, ok, now I remember! Once upon a time in a distant land...'" □

# POCAHONTAS

**Team Disney tackles historical fact, but keeps the magic in animation.**

*By Allen Malmquist*

POCAHONTAS, the 33rd animated feature film from Walt Disney Productions, premieres in June of this year, following a string of current hits rising from THE LITTLE MERMAID, to BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, to ALADDIN, to last year's THE LION KING, already shattering boxoffice and home video records. But Disney is not sitting on its laurels: POCAHONTAS follows these current hits, but strikes off on a path all its own.

"These are going to be fresh snowprints," hinted Mike Gabriel, the film's co-director, and originator of its inception.

"As we went through the story, less and less were we able to do things that we normally associate with a Disney feature," explained co-director Eric Goldberg, "because this one's subject matter was so different." POCAHONTAS offers a whole new tone for a Disney feature. This is the first film the Studio has done whose story comes out of historical fact: In 1607, explorers from the British Isles landed in what we now know of as Virginia, in an attempt to establish a settlement in the New World, fighting with Indians, the Powhatans, the Native American tribe to whom this land belonged.

Not that the Powhatans claimed to "own" the land in the way that Europeans conceived, but cultural differences such as this only exasperated a confrontation already volatile enough, as the White Men sought a hold in the Indian's world. Chief Powhatan's 11-year-old daughter, who playfully cartwheeled naked amongst the newcomers, later played a very serious role in their lives, bringing them the food they



Team Disney, co-directors Eric Goldberg and Mike Gabriel, with producer Jim Pentecost (standing), developing a folkloric approach to real events.

needed to survive, and, at one point, actually saving the life of John Smith. That girl's name, was Pocahontas.

This young girl is replaced by a young adult in Disney's telling, and the friendship, or curiosity, or kindheartedness—whatever her historical relationship to John Smith, has been replaced by a love story.

Disney's artists and writers take other liberties with historical fact, in a folkloric adaptation of real life events. Starvation, violence, nudity disappear; events shift in time, mesh together into cinematic propriety. "You're trying to bridge what is authentic and what is dramatically correct," explained John Pomeroy, supervising animator for the character of John Smith. "It may not necessarily be 100% historically accurate," added Eric Goldberg, "but it represents the tensions of the times, and the major players who were there, and that's really what we were after."

Still, the Studio takes its tale's historical origins seriously. Filmmakers met with members of the historical society preserv-

ing Jamestown today, and sought constant input from the Native American leaders of today's Virginia-area tribal groups. Artists sought to bring out the details of Powhatan life, to enrich this film with the detail only reality can provide.

Character animators did the same. Extensive research went into the sculpting of this film's John Smith, studying the man through his journals writings, trying to figure out his outlook, his self, and from that, creating a dramatic personage for film. "He was an adventurer, an explorer, a warrior and a man of discovery," explained Pomeroy, "but he was a man who was missing something inside of

him; he was searching feverishly for something." Though for what, he did not know. Disney portrays Pocahontas in a similar vein, a princess in her community, but feeling that her future holds some kind of destiny, that an important purpose in life awaits her finding. These two vastly different individuals, from vastly different cultures, find that for which they search, together. In each other.

Adhering to this film's overall goal of realism, animators utilized live-action reference footage extensively, not in rotoscoping, or even laborious copying, but for ideas and nuances to translate into their animation, to reveal the richer, less obvious emotions found in these new type of characters, with more subtle, varied physical expressions. "In what the animator has been asked to do as far as bringing those subtleties to life in drawing form, it's probably the toughest assignment I have ever had in my 23-year career as an animator," admitted Pomeroy.

Not that Disney has any intention of cre-

**“This is a conscious effort to expand. It’s probably the toughest assignment I’ve had in 23 years as an animator.”**

**—Animator John Pomeroy—**



**Pocahontas, the Indian Princess of the Powhatan tribe who saved the settlers of Jamestown, voiced by Irene Bedard, the native American star of SQUANTO.**



ating painted live action. The motion remains Art, and lives in a designed world with a bold, clean, linear emphasis. “I saw immediately in the Virginia terrain a strong sense of horizontal and vertical,” explained art director Mike Giaimo, “these long stretches of horizon and enormous tall pine trees.” All which support the mood and ideas of the film. “Even though we wanted to be very historically accurate,” continued Giaimo, “at the same time our story is all about enchantment.” Tree trunks of greenish-blue, leaves blowing with pink, purple, a rich rainbow as seldom seen in life, all combining to create the desired emotions and effects. Not to mention Magic: “There is a living spirit within everything on Earth,” said Michael Gabriel, explaining Native American spirituality, “within every rock and every tree, the little foam of water that laps on a lake, the ray of light on a cloud, these are all beings that you must have respect for.” Utilizing the strength of their medium, Disney’s animators bring this spiritually to literal life.

Native American actress Irene Bedard, who appeared in Disney’s own SQUANTO, A WARRIOR’S TALE, portrays Pocahon-

tas, with Glen Keane, who has done characters as dissimilar as Ariel the mermaid and Beauty’s Beast, supervising the animation, and Judy Kuhn providing the Indian maiden’s singing voice. Doing his own singing is perfectly cast actor Mel Gibson, sure to bring depth and flare to his portrayal of Captain John Smith.

All Disney modern animated features are co-directed, this one watched over and formed by the story-idea’s originator Mike Gabriel, who co-directed the recent RESCUERS DOWN UNDER, and Eric Goldberg, changing horses radically after having supervised the animation of ALADDIN’s manic Genie. In the highly collaborative mode of Disney filmmaking, these two worked with screenwriters Carl Binder, Susannah Grant, and Philip LaZebnik, art director Michael Giaimo, and a huge team of Disney artisans—including now-longtime composer Alan Menken, and his lyricist partner for this and Disney’s upcoming THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, theatre veteran Stephen Schwartz. They too have turned away from the bouncy, brash Broadway-style of recent successes, to

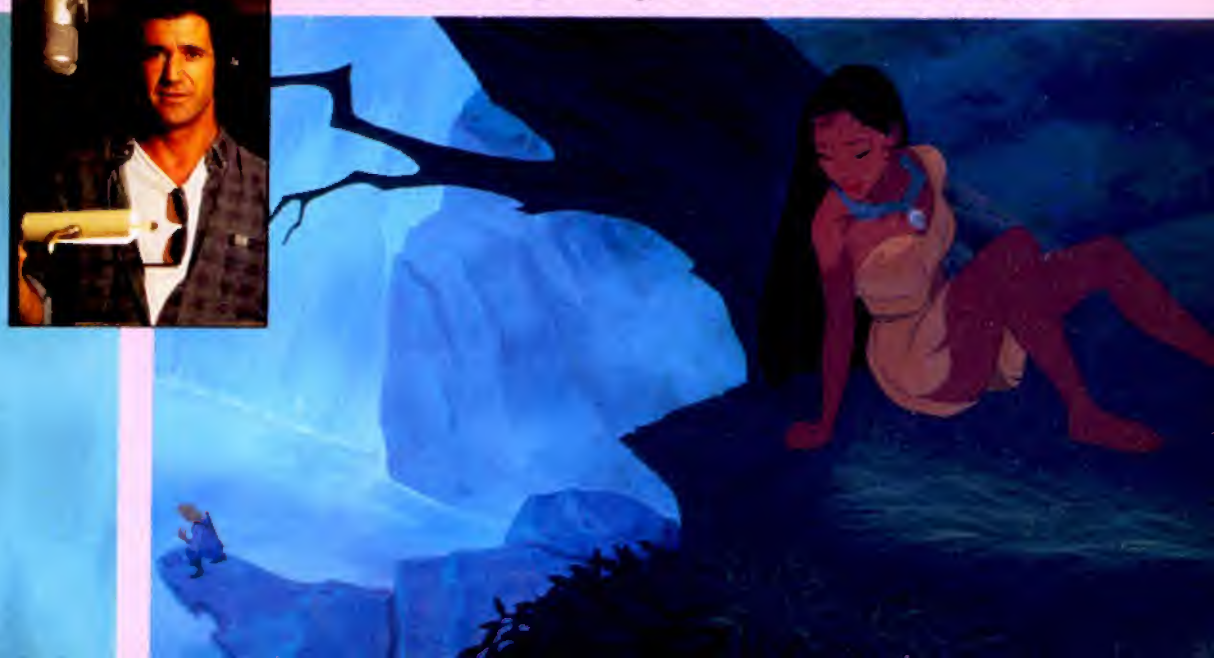
provide a score which blends with POCAHONTAS’ realism, and gentle magic, from the violently-thematic “Savages” to the central song, “Colors of the Wind.”

In this piece, Pocahontas explains her people’s worldview to a fascinated John Smith, takes him on a magical tour of the life and living in nature, and opens him up to perspectives he never realized existed. Just as POCAHONTAS has opened Disney’s artists up to a whole new style of storytelling, a whole new realm of animated art. “This is a conscious effort to expand,” explained Pomeroy, “searching for ways and means of telling more dynamic stories in different modes.” Not in flashy visuals or uncensored content, but in heart, in a new richness in emotion and depth, shown through the artistic expression of the artist’s pencil. “A beautiful Indian Princess falls in love with an English settler and is torn between her father’s wishes to destroy the settlers and her wishes to help them,” summarized Mike Gabriel. A deceptively simple summary, for the complex, emotional, layered film he has guided for over four years; a film sure to light the way to a new venue for Walt Disney Productions, for the animated film as Art, and to itself achieve a new depth of emotional impact with its audience. Not a product of some cartoon assemblyline, not a carbon copy of successes past, but, like its own central characters, an explorer into new lands. And a worthy one itself. □

**Captain John Smith, voiced by Mel Gibson (inset) the Jamestown leader saved to Pocahontas, a love story with the nuances of life.**



**Pocahontas views Smith from the forest and opens up the leader to Native American spirituality, a new awareness of life and nature.**



# JUDGE DREDD

## Sylvester Stallone gives stature to the British comic book icon.

By Alan Jones

When Danny Cannon's \$80 million science-fiction blockbuster JUDGE DREDD opens June 30, it will represent the culmination of years of dogged determination to put the well-respected British comic book hero on screen. Numerous scriptwriters, directors, star attachments and studio involvements have come and gone with an often alarming rapidity, yet one permanent fixture has remained in the tortuous saga to realize the epic adventures of the futuristic cop who hands out lethal, summary justice on the crime-washed city streets of the 23rd century. "JUDGE DREDD is a very dramatic, big-voiced movie," said star Sylvester Stallone. "It's extremely imperial in many ways, while echoing strains of Nazism, Hitler's genetic experiments and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*."

Director Cannon has described his overall vision of the piece as "STAR WARS meets



Stallone as Dredd, judge, jury and executioner.

BEN HUR" and, in common with so much else that has happened since, the JUDGE DREDD story begins with the watershed George Lucas classic.

In early 1977 Charles M. Lippincott first became aware of the "Judge Dredd" science-fiction strip in the just-launched *2000 AD* comic. Lippincott was working in London

at the time as the advertising and publicity supervisor of what was to become, by the summer of that same year, a unique boxoffice phenomenon. In fact, STAR WARS tapped exactly the same huge SF hungry market that the "Judge Dredd" comic strip was concurrently mining to make it the leader in its own media field. "I was an early convert to the 'Judge Dredd' strip," said Lippincott, "But it wasn't until I had to come to the United Kingdom again to work on ALIEN [in 1979] that I thought in terms of its movie potential. 'The Cursed Earth' story was running at the time, drawn by Brian Bolland, and it really caught my eye."

Lippincott began making inquiries about the "Judge Dredd" movie rights in 1980. "But I never got an answer back from the owners, Fleetway Editions Ltd.," said Lippincott. "Later, I heard the rights had just reverted from a documentary filmmaker whose name I can't remember, so I went after the

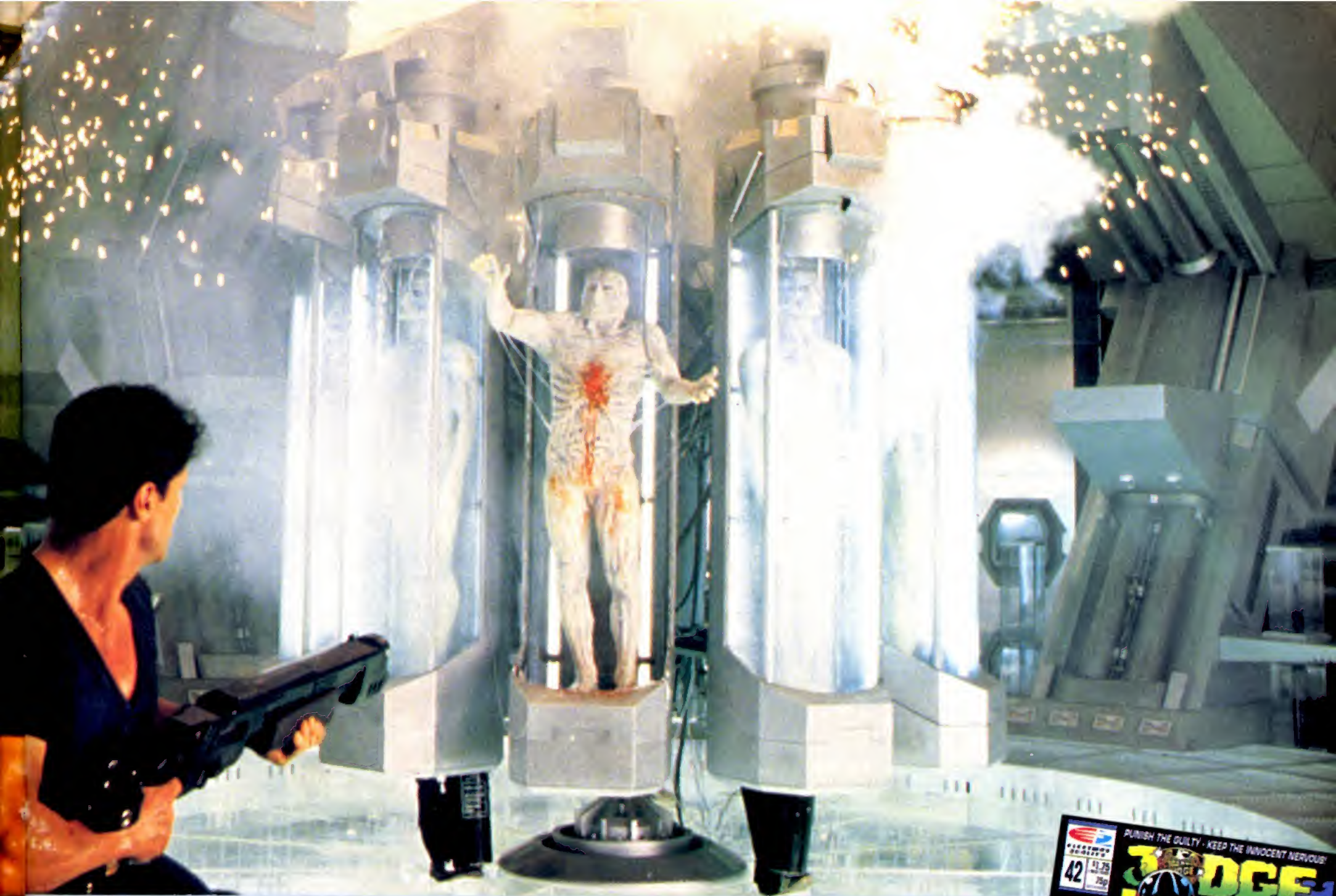


Dredd destroys the Janus clones.

property again. I remember it took a year negotiating with editor John Saunders before I finally secured the rights." That year was 1983 and for a short period Lippincott was joined by director Harley (DREAM DEMON) Cokeliss (formerly Cokliss) in pursuing the JUDGE DREDD franchise.

Recalled Cokeliss, "My son Barney read *2000 AD* every week. His favorite strip was 'Rogue Trooper' [Cokeliss is still intent on bringing this genetically engineered soldier to the screen] and through reading this I also got acquainted with Judge Dredd and the Fleetway galaxy of unusual heroes. I met the Fleetway guys through artist John Bolton, who was storyboarding THONGOR IN THE VALLEY OF DEMONS for me. [That sword-and-sorcery project in development by producer Milton Subotsky was never made.] I subsequently built a great relationship with John Saunders who literally let





Unlike the comic book incarnation (inset) who never takes off his helmet, Stallone will go much of the film visorless.

me run with a possible JUDGE DREDD film project to important producers like Bernie Schwartz and Bob Rehme at Universal. In fact, the latter introduction is why I got to direct BLACK MOON RISING for Rehme when he moved to New World Pictures in 1986."

But it was a film Cokeliss made in 1982 which stymied any further involvement in

JUDGE DREDD. "The producers of BATTLETRUCK/WARLORDS OF THE 21ST. CENTURY didn't get around to paying my fee until a year after I'd finished it," said Cokeliss ruefully. "I was broke and therefore couldn't afford the acquisition costs alone. It was my close relationship with John Saunders which made it easier for Charlie Lippincott to approach him

about eventually purchasing the full rights." With a deal finally done, Lippincott then engaged underground comic book writer Jan Strnad to write a first script treatment, while he toured the studios trying to drum up interest and pay for development of the project. Strnad wrote "Den," a sexed-up CONAN THE BARBARIAN variation. Sighed Lippincott, "I was turned down by everyone. Science fiction is an expensive genre and not an easy proposition. Even today you still find most science fiction projects being made independently. It's usually after their costly production that the studios pick up the distribution rights."

It wasn't until 1986 that Lippincott found a kindred spirit in Edward R. Pressman, producer of such diverse genre fare as PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, CONAN, YOU BETTER WATCH OUT, THE HAND, THE CROW, STREET FIGHTER and the upcoming



ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU remake, who believed in the project as much as Lippincott did. "While Ed liked the 'Judge Dredd' idea, he felt as I did, we'd be somewhat hindered by a film currently in production at the time," recalled Lippincott. That movie was Paul Verhoeven's ROBOCOP and, "We knew something similar like JUDGE DREDD couldn't possibly come out in conjunction."

Meanwhile, Lippincott had



Judges line in salute at the entrance to the chambers of Chief Judge Griffin.

# JUDGE DREDD

## SYLVESTER STALLONE

*The action star on his science fiction persona.*

By Alan Jones

JUDGE DREDD may be set in the 23rd century, but for Sylvester Stallone what it depicts for the future has startling roots in the present. The premier movie Action Man noted, "What happens in JUDGE DREDD is not far off from happening in our own foreseeable future. I believe if we follow the same channels we will soon have the same kind of anarchy. In the DREDD universe, elections threw the government out. They were a disaster and the President could never make a decision. Does that sound familiar? Chaos reigns and this is where the Judges came in. Democracy didn't work anymore and America became a police state where three things are clear: You know who you are, who the good guy is and who the bad guys are. No more politicians, no more deceptions, no

more lying. The Judges mete out the most straightforward police procedure of all and, while this doesn't work when pushed to the extreme sometimes, it's about the best system to cope with the existing state of affairs."

Stallone feels it's time somebody took the same sort of stand today. "What America needs is one person in an influential position to literally get up there and tell the truth," said Stallone. "Our legal system isn't working. Our criminal system stinks. It's corrupt, so we're throwing it out and starting from scratch. Crime has risen 450% in the last 20 years. If that were a business it would be bankrupt. Yet we seem to keep making things worse by being too liberal or making deals on the side. Look at the death penalty. 95% of people want it. Everyone walks on eggshells with the gun control lobby, too. There are too many interest groups now. No

Stallone takes advice from resident Dredd expert, director Danny Cannon (r).



Stallone as Dredd, he walks softly but carries a big Lawgiver gun.

one comes out and says we are not going to support one-parent families because those kids often grow up to be criminals. It needs one powerful voice to say that stuff in the definite way your father would. We need straight talk like, the next person who abuses a gun during a crime should be hung within 24 hours. If that sort of thing was clearly stated, then you'd see something done. Society would change. In JUDGE DREDD something is done because you have a man who is the law. And the law in the future is the power of life and death."

JUDGE DREDD is Stallone's way of opening the eyes of prospective audiences to such home truths rather than get on his political soapbox. "Actors are given too much credit with regards their political influences," he said. "Society is going to have to make some huge changes socially if the world of

JUDGE DREDD isn't going to be our future. But that isn't the responsibility of any Hollywood star. However, I believe we would all be better off if we had a few Dredds around. We'd all feel a lot safer at night."

Noted Stallone, "DREDD is a symbol of the '90s as ROCKY was a role model for the '70s and RAMBO a hero for the '80s. Criminals are now getting down to a point where they know how to abuse civil liberties and democracy to the best of their advantage. JUDGE DREDD is at the complete other end of the legal spectrum. People have abused their rights so much that justice has been taken out of their hands and controlled by the judges, for without them, there would be chaos."

JUDGE DREDD may start out as arguably rather fascist but he is ultimately dedicated to preserving life, as Stallone pointed out. "He begins in very



## THE DREDD PROPHECY

**“What happens in the film is not far off from happening in our own foreseeable future,” said Stallone. “If we follow the same path we’ll have the same anarchy.”**



Stallone and Armand Assante as Rico, Dredd's evil twin clone brother. Right: Stallone and producer Beau Marks review an action take on video tape.

strict mode but when he's branded a criminal himself and sent away to prison, he comes back with a different kind of mentality," said Stallone. "Rob Schneider plays my sidekick Fergie and he's the innocent person audiences will identify with because they sure won't identify with me! Gradually Dredd gains a little more heart and soul. That's what I liked about the character. I've been categorized as an actor who doesn't think. Someone who just acts physically. In the past I performed stunts without logic because that was the purest form of heroism my characters could register. DREDD was a deliberate choice on my part to back that kind of heroism up with thought."

Despite all his early misgivings about director Danny Cannon, Stallone now can't praise him enough. "I find that many directors tend to shy away from me because they don't have the belief in themselves," said Stallone. "Perhaps I know too much about the directing process and it fazes them. Some of the older directors I've worked with have been a little paranoid. But Danny never had that problem of insecurity because he was so focused on what he wanted. He's far more focused than even I am, and that says a lot. I never make my movies alone. I've always brought in the most talented people I can find. Why have one good football player amongst a terrible team? You are bound to lose. All good players mean you're more likely to win. Having Danny on my side can only help."

Throughout the filming of JUDGE DREDD, Stallone has been in a highly reflective mood. He noted, "The worst thing about success is losing it. Success is an addiction worse than heroin. It fills you with such validation and a sense of you are right, you've made it. Once the moment vanishes you realize you weren't that successful after all and it was only temporary. I've always said artists die twice. The second time is easy. It's the first, the artistic death, that's the living nightmare because it can last for 50 years. Walking into a room with people whispering, 'He hasn't had a hit film in years' is the worst part of all. I know, I've been there." □

engaged director Tim Hunter, plus his sometime screenwriting partner, crime novelist James Crumley, to rewrite the Strnad script. Together Hunter (director of TEX and THE RIVER'S EDGE) and Crumley had penned an unproduced script titled THE DANCING BEAR while Crumley had two solo screenplays to his credit; THE LAST GOOD KISS and TUNNELS OF CU CHI. Strnad's script had taken as its basis "The Return of Rico" comic strip story which pitted Dredd against his evil clone "brother." "They spent over a year rewriting it before Hunter went off to work on ROBOCOP 2 for his friend [producer] Jon Davison," said Lippincott. "Their involvement didn't last either! You know, the problem with JUDGE DREDD has never been about getting a director interested but getting the script absolutely right."

One person who seconds Lippincott's statement is Peter Briggs, brought onto the project in June 1992 after he'd written the spec script ALIEN VS. PREDATOR which was causing much industry excitement

at the time. That hot script had been bought by Largo (then owned by producer Larry Gordon) and the company was negotiating with Pressman to use their JVC pool of Japanese finance to back the JUDGE DREDD movie. "Lloyd Levin, Largo's development man, asked me if I'd like to write a script for JUDGE DREDD," said Briggs. "I said yes immediately as I was a huge fan of the comic and had grown up with it. I'd heard years before that Harley Cokeliss was going to direct as he'd put Lippincott onto Dredd in the first place. Once Pressman and Lippincott agreed to hire me—they read ALIEN VS. PREDATOR for reference purposes—the negotiations with Largo broke down. I then had to choose between being loyal to Largo or deserting them for a possible chance of working with Arnold Schwarzenegger, whom they had penciled in to play Dredd at this time. To my eternal regret I chose JUDGE DREDD."

Briggs was provided two earlier screenplay drafts. "The first was the Hunter/Crumley one which used the Judge Death

character in a story about mutants from the Cursed Earth being asked by Mega-City One authorities to sort out an environmental crisis," said Briggs. Judge Death is Dredd's main nemesis in the comic strip. He's a humanoid alien who lives in a parallel universe and believes that if all crime is committed by the living, then life itself must be a crime. Gaining access into Dredd's world, Judge Death judges every human being he comes into contact with as always guilty. Although very well written in Briggs' opinion, the Hunter/Crumley script was too dense and well-meaning. "There was also very little action," said Briggs. "The character that registered most strongly



was a mutant named Mona who doesn't exist anywhere in the comic strip itself. I felt that was a mistake."

**I**t looked like he'd taken the money and run," Briggs said of the second screenplay draft he was given, written by Crash (SNIPER) Leyland of the Leyland Motors family. "It was the 'Judge Death' story again and a very zappy read," said Briggs. "But the dialogue had literally been taken from the speech bubbles in the comic. There had been no attempt to add new material."

With Peter (BILL & TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY) Hewitt mentioned as a director possibility, pending Schwarzenegger's approval, writer William (TERMINATOR 2) Wisher was brought in to write a separate script from Briggs, "The idea being Schwarzenegger would read both and then pick the one he liked best," said Briggs. According to Lippincott, Wisher was originally hired to super-



## COMIC BOOK ORIGINS

*Judge Who? The story behind the creation of Britain's comics sensation.*

By Alan Jones

viser a script pitch by Michael De Luca (writer of *FREDDY'S DEAD* and *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS*, now turned president of production and chief operating officer of New Line Cinema). "Michael wanted to go back to the 'Rico' strand and that's how Bill [Wisher] got involved initially," said Lippincott. Wisner was to continue with the "Rico" story in his draft.

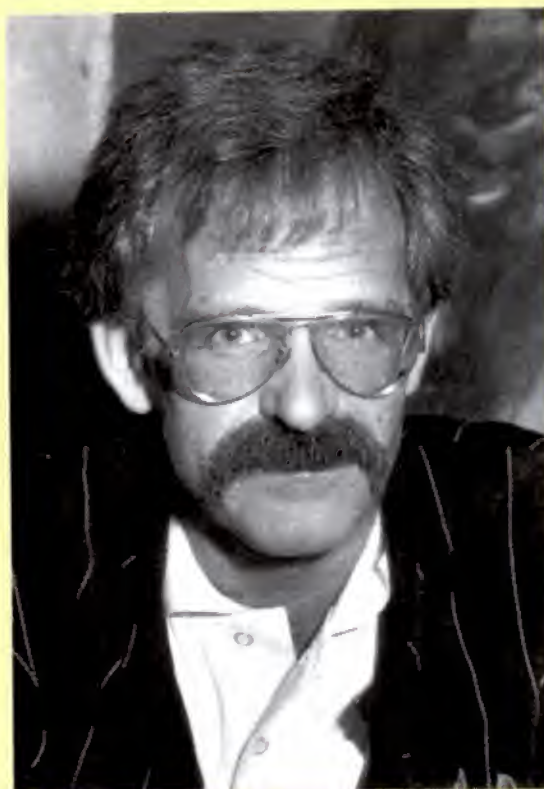
But Briggs, like Hunter, Crumley and Strnad, felt the correct route to pursue was the Judge Death angle. "'Death' is the key villain in the JUDGE DREDD universe," said Briggs. "He is what the Joker is to *BATMAN*. But Lippincott didn't want to use Judge Death at all. No, that's not quite true. There was some talk on his behalf about how Judge Death could be used to personify a kind of Black Death that could descend on Mega-City One. But I found out later that Lippincott at no point whatsoever really had any serious intention of developing the subject. He always thought Judge Death should be saved for the sequel. My argument was, 'What if the movie was a flop and they never got round to him?' That didn't seem to cut any ice." Noted Lippincott, "Judge Death has to be done exactly right. I was terrified he'd end up looking like Skeletor in *MASTERS OF THE UNI-*

Joan Chen as Ilsa Hayden, Rico's henchman, bumping off the judges and blaming it all on Judge Dredd.



In the 23rd century there are no more lawyers, no more trials, no more juries and no more appeals. As humanity became increasingly more violent, and civilization threatened to collapse, the crumbling legal system merged with the overburdened police force to create a powerful, efficient and ruthless hybrid dispensing both instant justice and punishment on the mean streets of Mega-City One. These feared guardians of society are judge, jury and executioner all rolled into one...and the most awesome Judge of all is Joseph Dredd.

Who? Many Americans may not be familiar with the Judge Dredd character, but that will change once Danny Cannon's \$80 million fantasy epic hits the screens June 30. While "Judge Dredd" may be an underground cult Stateside, he's the most popular, and revered, comic book hero in Britain today. For nearly two decades now the future lawman's adventures have been featured in the science fiction comic *2000 AD*, which sells an astounding 80,000 copies a week when it goes "in orbit every Saturday." The crimebuster's genesis began with Pat Mills, the driving force behind the launch of *2000 AD* in February 1977. Mills had previously launched the comics *Battle Picture Weekly* and *Action* under the IPC Magazines Ltd. banner and was given the job to produce a new weekly paper with science-adventure as its underlying theme. One of the ideas he toyed with was an occult story with the tentative title "Judge Dredd."



Carlos Sanchez Ezquerro, the Spanish artist living in London, who visualized the look of Dredd for the comic's 1977 debut.

Then John Wagner (who also writes under the pen name John Howard), one of Mills' co-workers on "Battle," mentioned a strip concept he was formulating about a future cop trained to uphold all aspects of the law with an almost machine-like precision. Mills figured his "Judge Dredd" heading fitted this story suggestion better and, after Wagner drafted a comic script which Mills re-wrote, both looked around to see who best could visualize the look of their law-enforcer with a grim attitude. They chose Carlos Sanchez Ezquerro, a Spanish artist living in London since 1971, who had impressed them on "Battle" after he'd visualized a convict commando tale titled "Rat Pack" with the forceful lead character Major Eazy.

What Ezquerro finally submitted was deemed by Mills

and Wagner to be the most exciting-looking character British comics had ever seen. In an interview published in *2000 AD* regarding his visual inspiration, Ezquerro said, "In the first script Dredd was described as a cross between a policeman and a judge; a person who had the functions of the police but who could also dispense justice on the spot. So I tried to accentuate these feelings and I imagined a very stern person for whom the law was the law and all personal feelings had to be suppressed...almost a robot. To make this clear, I dressed him in black and made his helmet look like an executioner's hood. He was a man of action, so his shoulders, knees and elbows had to be protected. Then, in order that he could be easily recognizable in a world full of cranks wearing all sorts of odd costumes, I drew the right shoulderpad in the shape of an American Eagle—the same emblem worn by today's American cops on their badges. The chain to Dredd's badge was added to make him look more tough. Finally, as he would be on a motorbike, I gave him a boot holster because it would be easier for him to draw from his leg rather than his waist when riding around."

But not only did Ezquerro supply the exact look for Judge Dredd to a delighted Mills and Wagner, he also led the way towards the perfect backdrop. For in those early frame backgrounds, Ezquerro had drawn unique vistas of a future city. The metropolis Judge Dredd patrolled contained high-rises dwarfing the Statue of Liberty,



Though available in U.S. editions, the British comic book sensation never caught on in this country.

soaring skyscrapers that seemed to touch the polluted heavens, and countless unsupported road levels curling upwards into infinity. This concept was taken by Mills to Doug Church, the man responsible for the visual appearance of the comic's other stories, who thought Ezquerra's vision was too big just to be explained as the New York of the future and suggested it include all the other cities on the eastern seaboard of America, too. Thus the vast, teeming Mega-City One was born, soon to be joined by Mega-City Two, Texas City and the Aspen Penal Colony in the grand, intricate scheme of Dredd history. Because the planet had been virtually destroyed by uncontrollable natural disasters—earthquakes, fires and floods—the rest of America was nothing but poisoned sand and would gain the description, “the Cursed Earth.”

With a new story written to incorporate all of Ezquerra's exciting visuals and designs, the first “Judge Dredd” strip (but the third actually drawn) appeared in issue 2 of *2000 AD*. It quickly fired readers' imaginations and, as successive episodes revealed new facts about crime and punishment in Mega-City One, and textured characterization supplied more information about the tough terminator, the popularity of “Judge Dredd” grew. It has flourished ever since, attracting a dedicated army of British fans, thanks to inspired writing, superb artwork by a roster of superstar artists like Mike McMahon, Brendan McCarthy, Ian Gibson and Brian Bolland, and the character's flexibility in adapting to any exotic location the unfettered imaginations of the “Dredd” writing team could dream up...including the moon.

The identical duplicates sto-

## DREAMING UP DREDD

“I dressed him in black and made his helmet look like an executioner's hood,” said designer Carlos Ezquerra. “The shoulder emblem is that of American cops.”

ry that serves as the basis for the film's script appeared in issue 30 of *2000 AD* (published July 17, 1977) under the heading “The Return of Rico,” although in the original strip Dredd's twin was also facially, as well as genetically, disfigured. Rico is played by the handsome Armand Assante in the film. Rico is not only murdering every judge in the Halls of Justice, and blaming Dredd, his escaped renegade convict “brother,” but he has also doctored Judge Griffin's Judge replacement clones with his own DNA so everyone will be an evil genetic mutation.

In the film Dredd must survive the attentions of Pa Angel (Scott Wilson), plus his pack of cannibal sons, including Mean Machine (Chris Adamson), while en route to an Aspen prison when a prison shuttle crashes.

The script element of the cannibal Angel gang was featured in the 1980 “Judge Child” story, the comic-strip take on THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE family. Mean Machine is Pa Angel's youngest son, considered a little effeminate, so his arm was torn off and a dial was incorporated into his brain with the four settings “Surly,” “Cross,” “Angry” and “Mean.”

Fergie (spelled Fergee in the strip), who teams up with the escaped Dredd, has had a major character overhaul to accommodate the comedy persona of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE star (and DEMOLITION MAN co-star) Rob Schneider. Appointed an honorary judge by Dredd, sleazy Fergie played a major role in the overthrow of mad tyrant Judge Caligula in “The Day the Law Died” story which ran for 20 weeks in 1978. In the film, Dredd and Fergie find their way back into Mega-City One from the Cursed Earth through a garbage incinerator chute.

While it was the nine-part “Robot Wars” adventure, which ran through the Winter of 1977 that shot the “Judge Dredd” strip into pole popularity position, a design mistake in conceptualizing Rico's antique cyborg was to cost the JUDGE DREDD production even more money. One of the visual artists hired to work on JUDGE DREDD was Kevin Walker, who had never drawn the comic itself but another popular *2000 AD* strip titled “ABC Warriors.” As a result, Walker drew Rico's war-droid in the likeness of those he was familiar with, in particular, “Hammerstein.” When John Davidge, the current managing director of Fleetway, came to approve the design, he was surprised to find the unauthorized character rendering and, because work had already started on building the robot, the production was forced to pay for the rights to “ABC Warriors” also. □

Dredd carries his dead brother in the 9/17/77 comic “The Return of Rico,” the film's story inspiration.



VERSE!"

Briggs prefers to draw a veil over exactly what happened next except to say, "I had one particular conference call with Lippincott...and then walked off the picture in January 1993." Does the shooting script credited to Wisner, Steven E. de Souza, Walon Green, John Fasano, Gary Goldman and Danny Cannon carry any of Briggs' ideas at all? "Not really," said the scripter currently writing *FREDDY VS. JASON* for New Line. But he added, "You know, in all the scripts I read, Judge Anderson was the major female character. She's the senior PSI Judge with telepathic powers responsible for investigating all the supernatural crimes in Mega-City One. In fact, she beats Judge Death in the comic, not Dredd. There was even a stupidly gratuitous moment in the Hunter/Crumley script where she gives Dredd a rub down after mentioning how tense he looks. It was sheer exploitation in *THE SPECIALIST* shower scene tradition. I suggested Judge Hershey be the strong female instead. Since then I've never heard another reference to Judge Anderson and Diane Lane was picked to play Hershey. So you make up your own mind."

**L**ine producer Beau Marks became involved with *JUDGE DREDD* in the early '90s also. "I was producing *BEVERLY HILLS COP III* for Joel Silver when we entered a cost conflict with Paramount Studios which got it delayed indefinitely," said Marks. "However, Paramount called me about a month later and said, 'We're considering doing this science fiction film titled *JUDGE DREDD*. It's very much like *ROBOCOP*. Are you interested in reading the script and budgeting it?' They told me \$16 million would probably cover it. When I read the script two thoughts immediately crossed my mind. Firstly, it was totally different than *ROBOCOP* and, secondly, there was no way the budget figure they suggested would be enough. Based on what I said, they dropped the property."

But *JUDGE DREDD* re-

## DREDD'S HIGH ROLLER

**"When I told Andy [Vanja] it would cost between \$50-\$100 million, he didn't flinch at all," said producer Beau Marks. "He viewed *JUDGE DREDD* as a film event."**



Joanna Miles as Judge McGruder, who sentences Dredd to life in prison.

fused to go away for Marks, who joked, "Why should it? I've spent more time over the past ten years being paid to develop films that have gotten cancelled than anything else." Nevertheless, Marks name has appeared on some heavyweight boxoffice fare like *THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER*, *PREDATOR* and *DIE HARD*. Those three John McTiernan-directed hits led to a fourth, *MEDICINE MAN*, and to close contact with Cinergi boss Andrew G. Vajna, who had founded the company in November 1989 after selling his interest in Carolco to former partner Mario Kassar. Noted Marks, "Three months after the Paramount call, Andy [Vajna] telephoned and said, 'I've got this *JUDGE DREDD* script. Will you budget it for me?' It was exactly the same script Paramount had sent me, the difference being when I told Andy it would cost between \$50-\$100 million, he didn't flinch at all. Because Andy, Mario and Carolco were in the 'Film Event' business, and he viewed *JUDGE DREDD* with that possibility. His attitude was totally opposite to Paramount's. That

was in May, 1993, and the next year was spent putting *JUDGE DREDD* together conceptually, rewriting the script and turning it into a reality with key departmental personnel."

Absolutely vital to securing the kind of hefty budget needed to do *JUDGE DREDD* justice was the headline commitment by Sylvester Stallone. "Sly's attachment pushed *JUDGE DREDD* into another budgetary category altogether," said Marks. "Thanks to his worldwide reputation, you know the guaranteed boxoffice returns will be considerably higher. Therefore what you can initially spend is proportionately greater."

Noted Charles Lippincott, "My original casting plans always involved either Sly or Arnold Schwarzenegger. At one early stage though Sly was heavily into the action genre and made it clear he wouldn't consider science fiction. Bill Wisner [*TERMINATOR 2* writer] wrote his *JUDGE DREDD* draft with Arnold in mind, who showed an interest in playing the character. But then he made *LAST ACTION*

*HERO* thinking his career should change because he wanted his daughters to be able to see the movies he starred in for once. Arnold was very non-committal about *JUDGE DREDD*, actually. It surprised me when the press reported he was set to star because it was never that hard and fast. Andy had always wanted Sly and when he said yes, it reactivated the project again."

With him, Stallone brought his own entourage onto the production. Because Stallone brought his own personal makeup man over from the States, *JUDGE DREDD*'s makeup supervisor Nick Dudman had nothing to do with the superstar. He smiled with relief, "I have no problem with that," said Dudman. "He also brought his own hairdresser, bodyguards and wardrobe person. It's very much 'look but don't touch.' But then that's the nice thing about this cast. There are no prima donnas. Armand Assante was fabulous. So was Max Von Sydow. [Director] Danny [Cannon] was being worked off his feet 24 hours a day, yet he's always been up and wonderful to deal with."

Stallone noted that he was intrigued by the *JUDGE DREDD* script because, "It was a further move away from what I call the elementary ultra-violent films that have no story point above hard action. In the past I've had the reputation of being the good guy who sees the bad guy and then spends the rest of the movie running after him. No mystery there whatsoever. It's like going to a restaurant naked! I lost my career focus for a while and deserted my audience with movies like that. I was getting terrible reviews, usually on the domestic front, calling my performances awful. The zero support I got from the American press bothered me at the time. It was like 'Hey, we know Stallone's dead. We're waiting for the next movie/funeral so we can write his eulogy.' Then I made *CLIFFHANGER*. I knew it would either be a hit and I'd be proud of it, or it would bomb and I'd kill myself! It changed everything and led to *DEMOLITION MAN*."

Stallone continued, "There are similarities between *JUDGE*

# JUDGE DREDD

## MAKEUP DESIGN AND EFFECTS

*Pitting Dredd against Janus Clones and Mean Machine.*

By Alan Jones

You may not be familiar with his name yet, but Chris Halls is on the fast track to becoming a key figure in the genre. Those in the know are calling his contributions as Conceptual Illustrator to JUDGE DREDD of fundamental importance to the finished product. They impressed director Stanley Kubrick enough for him to pull Halls into the lengthy pre-production process of the 2001 maestro's new science fiction project A.I. (artificial intelligence). However, being the conceptual illustrator is only one of the credits he'll receive on JUDGE DREDD. The other one will read: Design and Building of the Mean Machine Makeup Effects, although it has been a bit of a struggle for Halls to gain the recognition in the department.

Like so many technicians in the British film industry, Halls began his career with Bob

Keen's Image Animation special effects operation (in fact, Image Animation did some uncredited work on DREDD, building the ABC Robot), including work on HARDWARE and ALIEN 3 in his impressive list of credits. Then, when work became scarce in the early '90s, Halls moved over to comic illustration for 2001 AD. For a year and a half he was specifically responsible for the "Mean Machine" solo strip and that's how he came to director Danny Cannon's attention. Noted Halls, "I'm only working on DREDD because Danny loved my work. I was initially hired to design the ABC Robot and Dredd's helmet, which I modeled in clay in the art department."

But Halls soon found his design brief expanded to include the character he had become synonymous with thanks to Sylvester Stallone's insistence on adding extra scenes in the script with Mean Machine.



Danny Cannon (r) directs one of Nick Dudman's Janus Clones as it comes to life, a hatching horror of half-formed raw muscle and gelatinous sinew.



"Dredd and Fergie are dragged off to the Angel Gang's lair and strung up," said Halls. "This leads to a major duel between Dredd and cannibal Pa Angel's purposely deformed son Mean Machine. It ends with his electrocution and Dredd uttering the one-liner, "Shocking!" Because makeup supervisor Nick Dudman had his hands full with the Janus Clone sequence, Halls was also asked to sculpt, build and apply the Mean Machine prosthetics to actor Chris Adamson. "Mean Machine took 11 weeks to perfect," said Halls. "There was a separate mechani-



Chris Adamson as Mean Machine, design by Chris Halls, now working for Stanley Kubrick on filming A.I.



Applying makeup to the Janus Clones, Nick Dudman layers on the Vaseline. The clones are judges in development, cultured from the DNA of Chief Judge Fargo.

cal arm, complete with an aluminum and fiberglass claw, plus an under-structure to support it. A body suit was placed over that. Then there was a two-piece fiberglass skull cap so the dials could go round, a face piece, and contact lenses—one black, one white.”

Halls was given a team of five assistants in a free-floating workshop, all borrowed from other departments, for the 10 days it took to complete the

Dudman adds color to one of two prosthetic clone suits, augmented by 70 of the clone dummies.



whole Mean Machine sequence. Noted Halls, “At first it took four hours to apply the makeup to Adamson, but we ended up getting it down to three. I’m extremely pleased with the end result. Mean Machine looks very hi-tech and up to date now and happily people are telling me it’s one of the most memorable sequences in the movie.”

JUDGE DREDD’s major set piece involving makeup and prosthetics work, the deconstruction of the Janus Clones, was supervised by Nick Dudman, who began his auspicious career as Stuart Freeborn’s trainee on *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, where he worked mainly on Yoda. Dudman had been approached three times during JUDGE DREDD’s tortured production history to crew up a prosthetic workshop.

There have been a few changes in Dudman’s circumstances since he designed and applied Jack Nicholson’s Joker make-up for *BATMAN*, created a completely new Monster for Roger Corman’s *FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND* and spent several abortive months on the now-shelved Joel Schumacher film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s stage musical smash *Phantom of the Opera*. Dudman noted he has a contractual hold on the latter, in case it resurfaces. For one, he left his suburban London base of many years

and moved to a 215-year-old Georgian inn at Kendal, Cumbria, in the Lake District. There “in close proximity to Manchester Airport and major motorways so we aren’t as cut off as you’d imagine,” he and his partner Sue Oakes, set up a company called Pigs Might Fly to supply makeup effects for the film and television industry. Recent credits include Neil Jordan’s *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*, Mel Gibson’s *BRAVEHEART* and Jerry Zucker’s *FIRST KNIGHT*.

Dudman was initially contacted by the JUDGE DREDD production to handle the Clone makeups for the entire Janus Laboratory end sequence where production designer Nigel Phelps’ gleaming metal and glass circular chamber has stacked incubators all filling up with protoplasm.

Dredd and Rico begin their duel to the death in the midst of this shiny hi-tech factory that hatches horror from half-formed raw muscle and gelatinous sinew.

“That sequence was my primary concern to begin with but then it transpired the man who they wanted to do all the straight makeups—glamour stuff, contact lenses and Armand Assante’s look—wasn’t available,” said Dudman. “So they asked me to do that as well. Elsewhere it’s been the usual run-of-the-mill prosthetics for bits of torn-apart and blown-up bodies.”

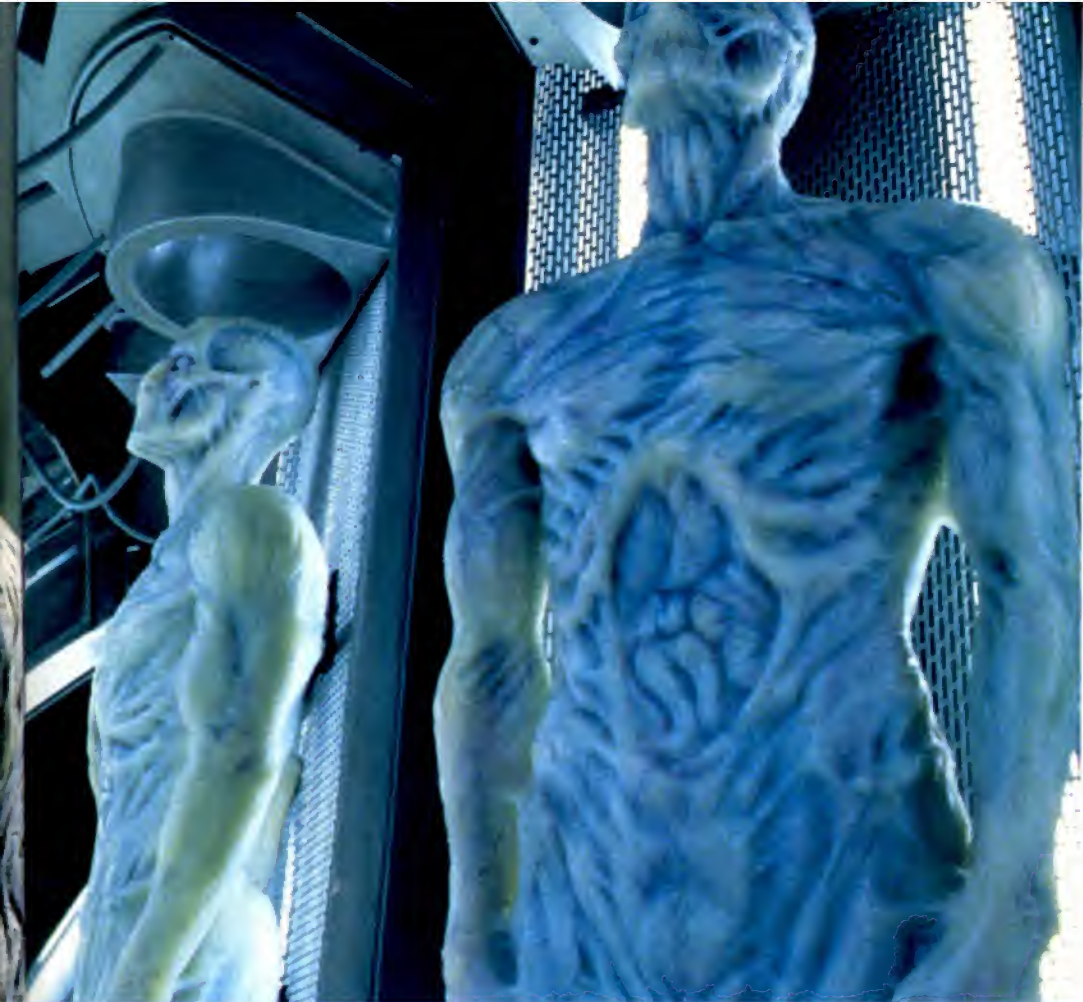
Because the Janus Laboratory sequence had always been scheduled to film near the end of production, it meant Dudman had the entire run of the shoot to test and perfect his ideas. He said, “We originally started off

Dredd fights Mean Machine, the technological flotsam of the Cursed Earth, the vast expanse of America now riddled by uncontrollable natural disasters.





**“JUDGE DREDD has action beats, but it’s more Hitchcockian, about the action of the mind,” said Stallone. “I never knew comics could be this cool and thought-provoking.”**



Dudman wanted the clones to look anemic, almost inhumanly translucent.

with 10 Clone dummies and two guys in some form of prosthetic suit,” said Dudman. “It’s now up to 70. I’ll admit the Clone design was a hard one to figure out. I was determined to make it different from anything ever seen on screen before or something that audiences would expect. At the time, they were concerned about the rating and didn’t want it too explicit. PG-13 was our initial brief but suddenly it changed. Overnight the production went from using no blood at all to throwing buckets of gore everywhere.”

Continued Dudman, “I decided I liked the idea of the Clones looking anemic, as if they’d reached the point where they were just about to be filled up with blood but it hadn’t quite happened yet. Like chicken meat almost. That’s why I went for a pale blue and lavender washed-out image, an inhuman translucent silicone look. I studied reference books on anatomy and dissection and decided to get away from those usual color schemes. It was a fantasy after all. I could do anything I wanted. I did a range of paintings based on this concept which Danny leafed through and said, ‘That one.’ It was as simple as that.”

The Clone dummies posed no problem with regards to Dudman’s look. Various silicones could achieve the exact translucency. But getting it right

on an actual person proved a major task. “Firstly, we had to use foam latex,” said Dudman. “It’s a dead-looking and opaque material so we had to artwork it in different ways. We painted the sections using interference colors. These are iridescent hues which throw out different levels of light depending on what angle you view it from. Rather like shot silk. Then the pieces are entirely covered in a product called Ultra-Ice, an optically clear gel, in which we suspended a completely different range of interference colors. This created a sense of depth on the foam surface. The nightmare was making sure the prosthetics were lit correctly or else the camera would see it differently from the eye.”

Two dancers were used for the moments in the Janus Laboratory where half-formed humanoid shapes ooze out of their incubators to shockingly clutch at the lead actors. “Each wore 12 prosthetic pieces glued to all but 2.5 square inches of their bodies,” said Dudman. “This space at the base of their spines, and the soles of their feet, meant they could sweat. It looked very believable.”

Despite the complexity of the work, Dudman termed the production “remarkably stress free,” he said. “JUDGE DREDD is on schedule, smooth running,

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DREDD and DEMOLITION MAN in that they both deal with frozen DNA, a cryogenic laboratory and a prison atmosphere. But the future in DEMOLITION MAN was of a pristine nature and the chances of that are virtually nil. DEMOLITION MAN could be JUDGE DREDD’s younger cousin at the outset, but it’s far more mature, realistic and hard-edged because there’s nearly 20 years of backstory thanks to the comic. JUDGE DREDD gave me the opportunity to explore what’s inside the character rather than deal with what’s going on outside him. DREDD has its action beats but it’s not solely about ‘action;’ it’s about the action of the mind, the action of the nerve, the fear, the subconscious. That is Hitchcockian action, real action. You know, I never knew comics existed that were on such a cool and thought-provoking level.”

Danny Cannon did. He’d grown up on the comic strip in *2000 AD* and although he always knew he wanted to be a film director from the age of three, he never thought he had a chance of helping JUDGE DREDD when he first heard it

was on the cards. Cannon laughed, “I even drew a poster of Judge Dredd and sent it into the comic. Imagine how thrilled I was when they actually published it! I saw my mother and father for the first time in months the other day. I took them out to dinner and they brought along a boxful of *2000 AD* comics they’d found molding away in the attic. I looked at them and felt really lucky. I’d cracked it. I was in the middle of the one movie I’d only dreamed of making.”

What’s even more extraordinary about Cannon landing the JUDGE DREDD assignment is he’d only made one movie prior to it which was a commercial failure in Britain and hadn’t even opened theatrically Stateside. But the North London-born-and-bred 27-year-old has clearly paid his dues. He began making films at the age of 16 and two years later won the BBC-TV Young Filmmaker of the Year award for his 40-minute short, *SOMETIMES*. One of the competition judges was director Alan (ANGEL HEART) Parker and he befriended Cannon, advising him to attend the National Film and

Mean Machine, Dredd’s primitive adversary by way of Wes Craven’s *THE HILLS HAVE EYES*, makeup by the film’s conceptual illustrator Chris Halls.



# JUDGE DREDD

## DEADLY DIANE LANE

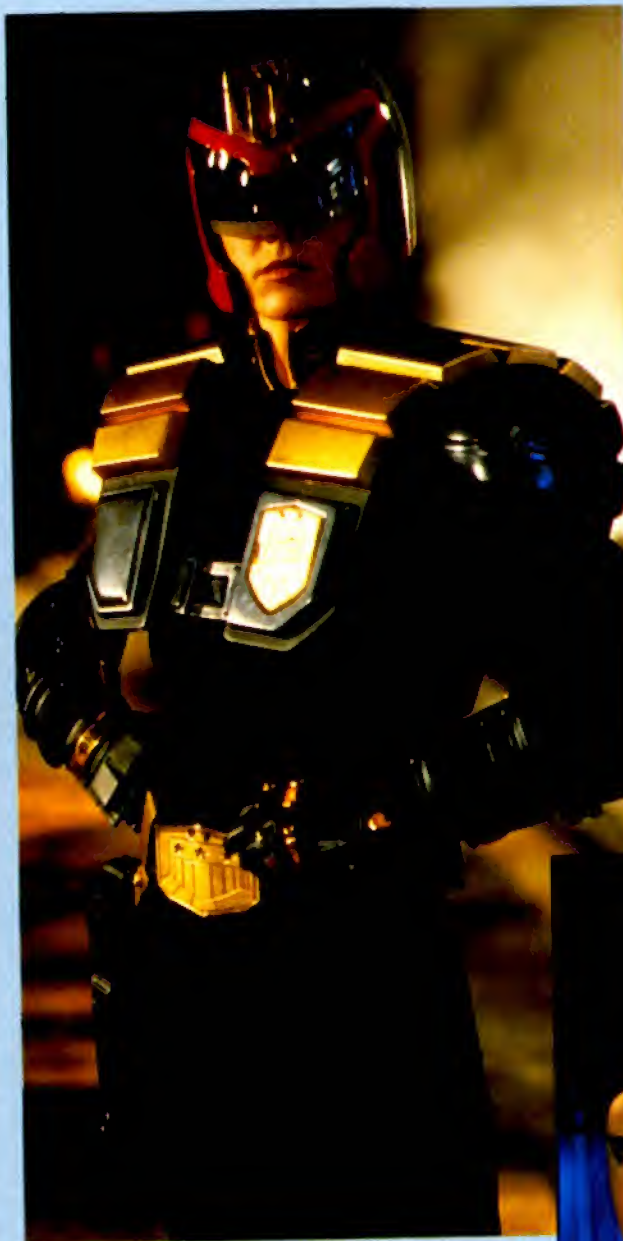
*Diane Lane on going ballistic as Judge Hershey.*

By Alan Jones

There's a story Diane Lane likes to tell about the first day she arrived in England to start filming JUDGE DREDD. The STREETS OF FIRE actress said, "I was in such a foul mood when I arrived at the airport from Los Angeles. I was jet-lagged and crabby and this person drove me to Shepperton Studios so I could take a look at the sets. Sure, they were impressive, but I was so tired I just moaned and moaned; I can't believe they chose me for the part, what am I doing here, I'm going to look so weedy next to Stallone, I look like shit anyway. My best friend Laura Dern said making JURASSIC PARK was a nightmare because she spent all her time screaming at dinosaurs that weren't there, it's a disaster. And this guy replied, 'Well we saw your audition videotape and you were perfect. There was a strength about you we liked and we thought you'd be a natural.' I stopped in my tracks. Who was this person I thought was a production dogsbody and how had he seen my audition? It turned out to be producer Beau Marks who I was berating and taking my anxieties out on. He hasn't let me forget it either. But I have since calmed down about everything."

Nevertheless, Lane is clearly still a mass of insecurities about her JUDGE DREDD role which looks set to open a whole new career for the LONESOME DOVE star who began acting at a very young age. She resisted accepting the role for a long time. Recalled Lane, "I went to see Danny Cannon at the casting sessions and said, 'You want me to do what? Fight an eight-foot robot and beat stunt-doubles up? Oh, and ride an exploding bike. Bye!' My first impressions of the role made me really reluctant to do it. However, that's when I seem to attract work. When you don't necessarily want the job, you seem to become exactly what they're looking for."

What finally convinced Lane was the fact she'd never tackled anything remotely like the part before. "Judge Hershey is so much larger than life and far removed from any kind of drama I've been used to," said Lane. "It solely relies on the suspension of disbelief. Research-wise, there's very little



Lane as Judge Hershey, Stallone's distaff co-star. Inset: Lane out of uniform with Judge tattoo on her arm.



homework you can do on a character who exists in the future." But Lane did try. "I needed to know in my own mind what forms of entertainment there would possibly be," she said. "Or is it just a tedious daily grind? What creature comforts there are and why was she even recruited to become a Judge in the first place? Hershey had to have a clear idea of herself outside of being a judge. That's where Danny came in. He grew up with the comic. He drew the storyboards. He knew everything I needed to ask. I felt safe."

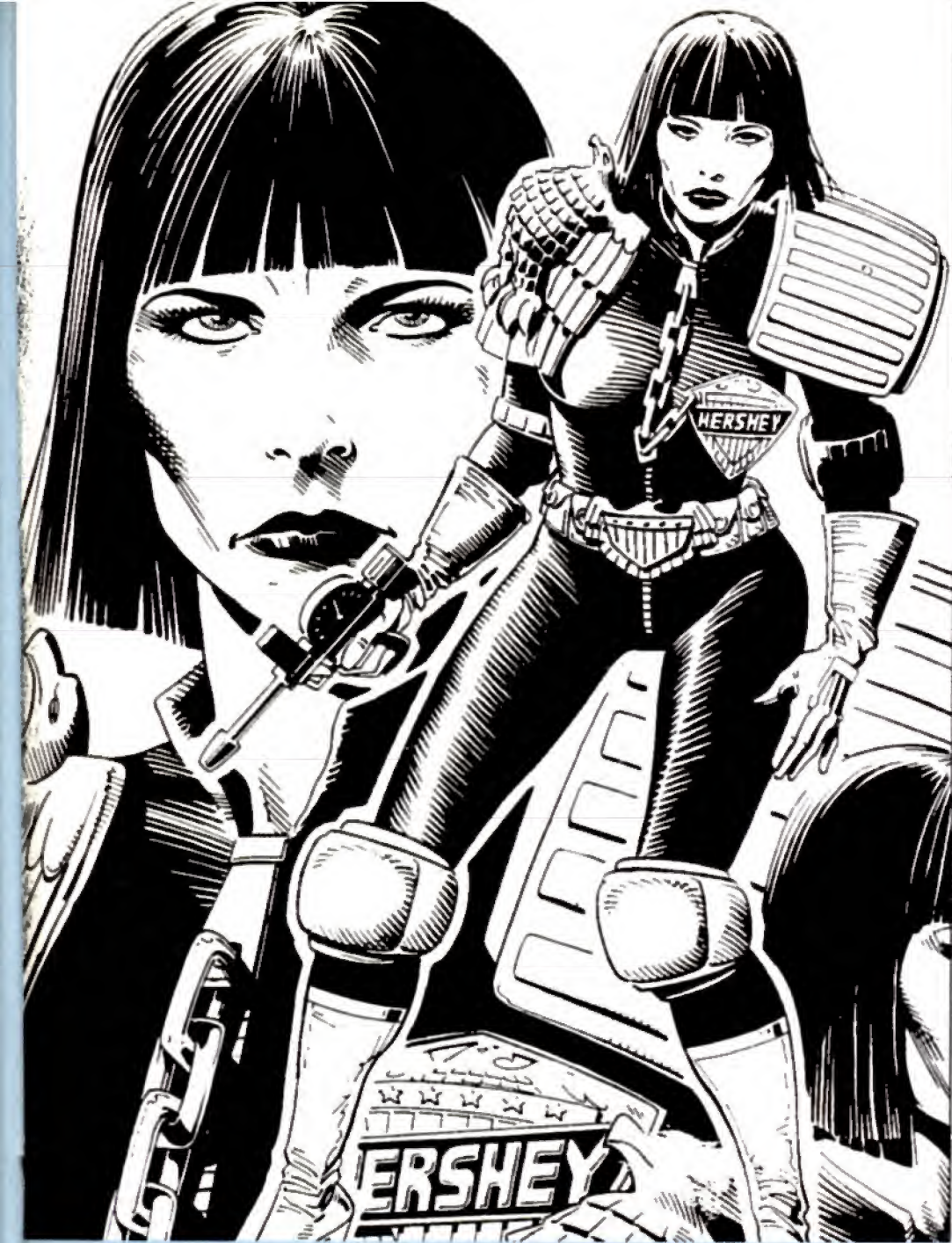
Naturally the chance to work with Sylvester Stallone was a big attraction. "Once I'd got over the outrageous aspect of

it," she laughed. "He's just so...big. I'm terrified I'm going to be dwarfed by the sets and eaten alive by Sly because he's so pumped up. At one point I begged Danny not to have us appear in the same shot as I was convinced I'd look puny next to him. But that's what a comic strip movie is, I guess. Not that I was into them, you understand. I'd never heard of JUDGE DREDD until I read the script. It takes a lot of energy and imagination to really enjoy them, I think. I'll stick to Barbie dolls!"

One rumor Lane does want scotched is that Judge Hershey is Judge Dredd's romantic interest. She pointed out, "He's a virgin. He doesn't even know what wooing is let alone try it out, start or follow through. You start training for Judgeships at the age of five, which doesn't leave much room to refine the art of romance. I reckon I'm the next best thing to a girlfriend. Perhaps she is interested in figuring him out,

finding the weak spots and digging around in the wounds, the difference being Hershey does try to find a separation between being a Judge and her private life. Dredd doesn't. That's what was brilliant for the movie actually. There's a parallel between Dredd and Sly. I have yet to figure out where the bigger-than-life star stops and the character underneath

begins. It's great because I've used that in my work. You'll probably laugh but I saw Hershey as a man in drag in many ways," said Lane. "All the Judges wear the same clothes and the future is not male/female delineated. That sexist issue was resolved a couple of hundred years before." And on the picture too. Lane was shocked to find Cannon expected her to do most of her stunts herself. "Danny wanted it played for real," she said. "Thank God I got into shape after having a baby a year ago because, in those costumes, what you see is what you get. There was one scene where I have to ride my Lawmaster bike wearing the helmet. The helmets are kind of useless be-



The comic book's Judge Hershey as envisioned by artist Brian Bolland.

cause they offer no real protection and limit your vision, too. There I was, perched on this huge bike like a bird on a hippo, with my feet miles off the ground, trying to navigate a wet backlot covered in potholes while looking at a fight taking place over my head. You try doing that and not falling over. I finally did it and fell over out of shot."

Lane found all the stuntwork to be as difficult. "I'd be going home to Christopher [Lambert, her husband] covered in bruises, aching all over, and he'd give me no sympathy whatsoever except to say 'Now you know what it's like,'" said Lane. "There's been no mercy on JUDGE DREDD. But I can see why Christopher got the bug of doing everything himself, because it is a major challenge and very satisfying when you've done it right. There was one moment where I have to suddenly turn around and see the Robot and begin fighting it. I couldn't get it right and had to do it over and over. I'm always certain my

directors are disappointed in me by the time shooting ends and I'm sure I must have exasperated Danny in this instance."

Generally though Lane and Cannon have got on like a house on fire. "That's because we are so similar," said Lane. "Both of us are easily misunderstood on first impressions. People always think I'm tough, hard and cold until they get to know me and Danny's the same way. It takes time to decode what he means by what he actually says. His London accent doesn't help either. I've finally got him down to one sentence and I know what he's getting at. I don't know where his energy comes from. No matter how tired he is Danny will go for take after take until he gets what he wants. I'm happy with that. So is Sly. I've often needed it because nothing I've ever done before has prepared me for JUDGE DREDD and my only hope is I can sell what my character is all about as well as possible." □

## JUDGE DREDD'S GIRL

**"I'm the next best thing to a girlfriend," said Lane of Hershey. "But Dredd's a virgin. You start training for a judge at age five with no time for romance."**

Television School. There, Cannon directed *PLAY DEAD*, a 50-minute London-based drama which was aired on British television by Channel Four.

Then Cannon directed his graduation film, the romantic thriller *STRANGERS*. What set this mini-feature apart was Cannon's shooting of it on location in Los Angeles with specific backing by Propaganda Films and director David (TWIN PEAKS) Lynch. Cannon's \$3 million feature debut, *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* followed, dealing with a New York cop (Harvey Keitel) on assignment in London to advise New Scotland Yard on the massive expansion of America's drug racketeers into Europe. At the time of directing *THE YOUNG AMERICANS*, Cannon stated, "It has always been my intention to make gritty, commercial cinema with integrity...entertaining films I would want to pay and see. *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* fits perfectly into this genre. I want to see exciting, modern and big-screen pictures come out of London."

However, *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* got a critical roasting from the British press, with Young Turk Cannon himself coming under a lot of fire. Most critics didn't review the movie. They reviewed Cannon's presumptuous arrogance in baldly stating what was essentially wrong with the British film industry. Cannon's forthright feelings were absolutely right, as the massive success of *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL* would underline six months later. Yet those personal attacks rankled and would rear their heads again just prior to *JUDGE DREDD* beginning second unit shooting in Iceland (for establishing shots of the Cursed Earth) in July, 1994, when it was rumored Cannon had been fired from the production.

But notwithstanding its British reception, *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* was becoming something of a *cause celebre* at Film Festivals abroad, like Sundance, where it began winning Cannon many fans. "Andy [Vonja] saw it at Cannes and was very struck by Danny's visual eye," noted producer Beau Marks. "It's a narratively flawed picture, but his obvious talents shine through. So Andy decided to offer Danny a job." Not the chance to direct *JUDGE DREDD*, as it turned out, but a stab at a *DIE HARD 3* concept. "I wasn't interested in that," said Cannon. "Your second movie has to be extremely well chosen to consolidate your position. I didn't feel *DIE HARD 3* was the right project to go with nor did I want to take the first big-budget movie I was offered. Because I knew Andy had the *JUDGE DREDD* property, I decided to pitch for that instead. I asked him point blank, 'Are you going to make the movie?' He said they had a

Stallone and Cannon look on critically, reviewing an action take filmed on the Janus Clone set.



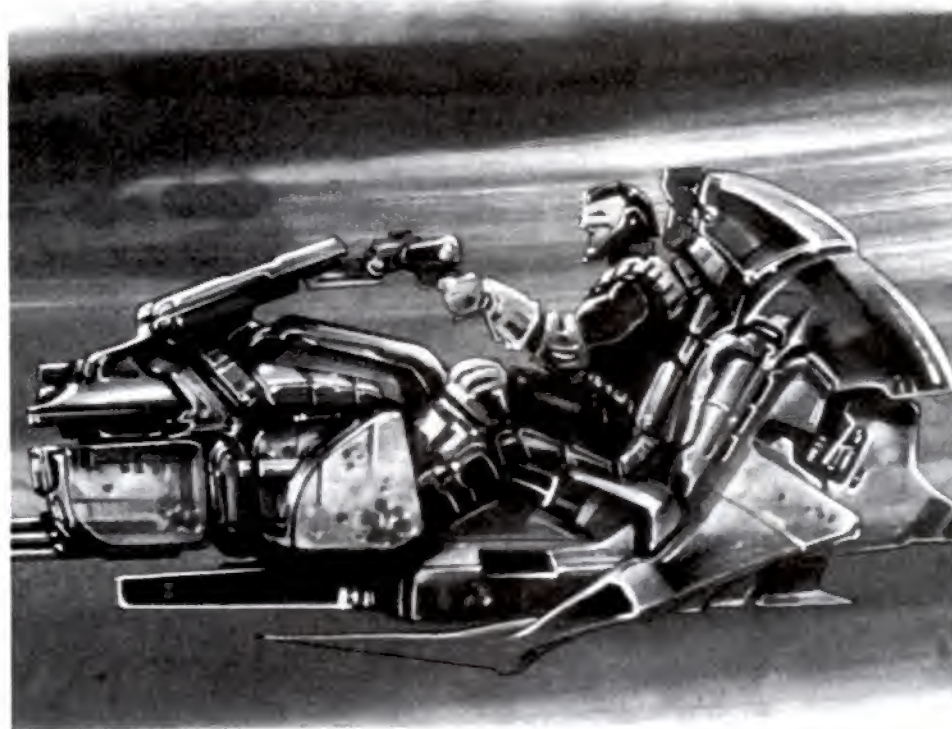
commitment from Sly, so they could do it. And I said, 'Look, you don't have to use any of the material I'm about to give you, but I loved 'Judge Dredd' as a kid and you should do this...and this ...and that.' Before I knew it a couple of hours had gone by and I'd talked through the whole film. They were amazed. I hadn't even read their script! I knew more than they did and I wasn't even on the payroll. I could see they were scared, though. JUDGE DREDD was a helluva responsibility to give a snotty kid like me."

**I**n Charles Lippincott's estimation, Cannon was a good choice. "Most established directors don't want to make this type of science fiction picture," said Lippincott. "It's something they do early in their careers when trying to establish their name. Although Tony [THE HUNGER] Scott had shown some interest in the project, I decided to back Andy on his decision to go with Danny. He was clearly adept visually and was very good with actors—he got a great performance out of Keitel in THE YOUNG AMERICANS—and I knew he was hungry enough for the opportunity to be able to keep it under control." Beau Marks agreed. He pointed out, "The options as I saw them were between someone who had a past reputation at handling a film of this size or someone who was desperately passionate about the character and the subject matter. Picking Danny was an easy decision to make because whatever he didn't know through lack of experience I made sure he could find out from the talented people I would employ to surround him."

Stallone needed a lot more convincing, though. "I wasn't sure about Danny at all," said Stallone. "I'd read the script and fallen in instant love with it because it contained all the best elements of science fiction rolled into one. I had just finished working with Renny Harlin on CLIFFHANGER and Marco Brambilla on DEMOLITION MAN and was leaning towards either of them for the job. Then I saw THE YOUNG AMERICANS on Andy's insis-

## DREDD DESIGN DILEMMA

**"Stallone looks fantastic in the Dredd outfit," noted designer Nigel Phelps. "The controversy over Sly keeping on the helmet throughout was a stupid one."**



Dredd's Lawmaster flying motorbike, a Nigel Phelps design that strayed from the comic book. "Yet another area for the fans to gripe about," quipped Phelps.

tence and thought 'Yeah, it's good. It's not futuristic but it is dark,' and decided to see what Danny had to say for himself. In came this English guy who knew everything and more about JUDGE DREDD carrying these mindboggling storyboards which visualized the atmosphere superbly. 'Can he really have that much versatility for one so young?' was the thought that crossed my mind. In the end I went with the passion of youth, his energetic zest and his aggressiveness for one main reason. He reminded me of myself when I was trying to make ROCKY. I wanted it then, like this kid wanted it now. It paid off for me and it will do the same for Danny."

Cannon's recollection of this first meeting with Stallone is of one long adrenaline rush. "I fucking went in there and told him exactly what I thought and believed in and never let him scare me once," said Cannon. "I wanted to make JUDGE DREDD so badly that nothing, not even Stallone, was going to get in the way of my ambition. My passion was so much bigger than his. Looking back, I can

see it was my single-minded dedication and bravado that got me the job. No one had ever grabbed hold of the material before and said, 'Hey, this is really important to me.' Everyone else looked at the script trying to figure out what angle to take. I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to reintroduce an old-fashioned hero into a very savage society. I wanted mythic intrigue, timeless mystique, King Arthur, honor and THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. Look at movies like SPARTACUS, EL CID and BEN HUR. They played earnest conviction to the camp hilt yet you believed every single cornball word. Our system of justice has that Romanesque feel to it. No one questions the ghost in HAMLET. It has to be his father, that's what drives him crazy. I tried to impress all this on Sly, how I wanted JUDGE DREDD to be a similar larger-than-life journey along epic and emotional lines for the audience. Sell it as if you care. Play it to the edge. Believe in what you're doing 100%. Or just forget it."

The director was determined

to stick to this resolution, too, which is why JUDGE DREDD isn't a literal adaptation of the comic strip. Cannon smiled, "I don't tilt the camera sideways once...While I don't see myself as a scriptwriter, I knew I would have to put my imprint on the screenplay somewhere. You have to bare your ass on a movie as big as this, so when the actors go 'I don't get my motivation,' you can scream at them with authority. For if you don't put pen to paper on the work you're doing, then I don't think you have the right to complain in that area. I've been critical in the past of directors who don't write, for that reason."

Making Dredd the solid consistent backbone of the story was what Cannon feels he brought to the script. "Here's this feared legend and icon, but how long can that last in a movie?" said Cannon. "Twenty minutes at most. Having the special power and mystique Sly brings to him is all very well, yet it could become a one-note bore. That was the trouble with all the prior scripts I read. After establishing his stainless steel credentials, what we do is start destroying this man's world. He brought order to chaos as the iron fist of the law but now his universe is showing chinks and corruption. Suddenly, through Rico setting him up, this incredibly untouchable man is the focus of all that's wrong with Mega-City One. That to me is sheer potent drama."

The script for the movie incorporates many characters and storylines from the comic's entire 17-year history. Aside from director Cannon, the five other writers who receive a script credit are Steven E. de Souza (COMMANDO, DIE HARD, STREET FIGHTER), Walon Green (THE WILD BUNCH, ROBOCOP 2, THE CROW), William Wisher (TERMINATOR, TERMINATOR 2), John Fasano (ANOTHER 48 HOURS) and Gary Goldman (BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA).

From these six high-profile names comes a taut tale of how Judge Dredd (Sylvester Stallone) saves Mega-City One from the repressive scheming of Judge Griffin (Jurgen Proch-

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# JUDGE DREDD

## PRODUCTION DESIGN

### DESIGN

*Paying homage to the look of BLADE RUNNER.*

By Alan Jones

"What are you making a movie about a pinball machine for?" is one of production designer Nigel Phelps' favorite anecdotes about the reaction he got from American friends when he told them what movie he'd been working on since June 1993. Noted Phelps, "That's when it hit me just how much of a virgin market waiting to be tapped we were exploring. Yet a huge part of the audience won't realize how the 'Judge Dredd' comic character was virtually the originator of similar ideas like ROBOCOP and TERMINATOR. Except Dredd isn't a cyborg or a robot, he's human, with all the emotional problems that entails. I get mad when people say to me, 'Oh, it's a ROBOCOP carbon copy.' Even

Nigel Phelps, protege of BATMAN designer Anton Furst, working on "the ultimate career experience."

if that were true, which it isn't, does that mean if you have John Wayne as a cowboy you can't have Clint Eastwood in a similar role? Of course not! The JUDGE DREDD concept is a real cool one. It doesn't take place in a total fantasy world or a Gotham City caricature. We've had the budget to ensure this 'event' picture has a believable relevance and that's what I've kept uppermost in my mind throughout what has been the ultimate career experience. It's all downhill from here."

Phelps would not be in the enviable position he's in now if it wasn't for the one man he considers to be his mentor. He was introduced to the late, great Anton Furst by a mutual friend and they got on like a house on fire. Phelps began as Furst's design assistant on Neil Jordan's THE COMPANY OF WOLVES and worked with him on every subsequent film including Stanley Kubrick's FULL METAL JACKET, Jordan's HIGH SPIRITS and Tim Burton's BATMAN. When Furst moved to America to work on AWAKENINGS, Phelps branched out on his own designing commercials and rock videos. Then Furst asked Phelps to join him in Hollywood where he'd been signed by Columbia to an exclusive contract. Sadly, Phelps became the last person to see Furst alive before he committed suicide, for it was Phelps who took his friend to the hospital for drug dependency treatment on that fateful day in 1991.

Remaining in Los Angeles, and continuing in the pop



Dredd astride his Lawmaster flying bike and its comic inspiration by Brian Bolland. Phelps modified the wheelbase to make it practical.

video/commercial field, it was director Marco Brambilla who suggested Phelps as the best production design candidate for JUDGE DREDD. "Marco was in the running for directing DREDD and was just finishing off DEMOLITION MAN," said Phelps. "He suggested producer Ed Pressman look at my portfolio and he seemed impressed. I'd met Ed before when he'd talked to Anton about designing DREDD during the time we were making HIGH SPIRITS in 1988. It's only now we have the proper technology to really do DREDD justice, what with CGI, etc. Why DREDD has been on the back burner for so long now is because it would have been even more expensive to make in the past. Now you can afford to be epic in a more convincing way. That's my opinion, anyway."



Like so many other crew members, Phelps wasn't a "Judge Dredd" comic fan. "I knew of the character, but I didn't go out every week to buy the latest strip," said Phelps. "Danny is the true blue 'Dredd' fan. But even he didn't want to stick too closely to the designs in the comics as we wanted very much to be our own entity. Yet the movie is remarkably true to the

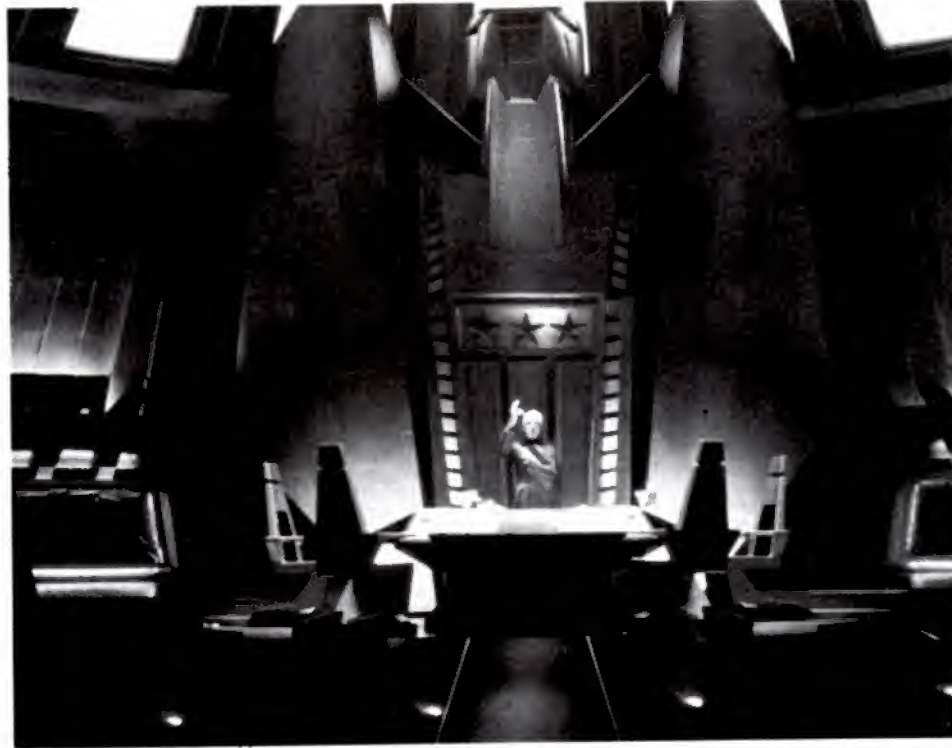
spirit of the comic. Perhaps the single biggest match are the Judge uniforms. I had a great deal of crossover with costume designer Emma Porteus in this area. She had a creative interest but it was down to me to design the belt buckle, the police badge, the boots and the helmet. Naturally, Dredd and the key Judges had all the expensive detailing like the eagle logo. Your regular street Judges were much sleeker with less design relief. The cadets had the same basic blue uniform but toned down with even less bronze. As for the Judge Hunters [the internal affairs officers of the future who bring crooked Judges to justice], they had to look awesome, scary and more mysterious."

Noted Phelps, "Sylvester Stallone looks fantastic in the lightweight Dredd outfit. The contribution his presence brings to the designs cannot be underestimated. With his helmet on, he is Dredd and he plays it with his chin out and everything. It's when he takes the helmet off for the more vulnerable material which makes his Dredd a brilliant portrayal. The whole controversy about whether Sly should keep his helmet on throughout the entire picture is a stupid one. What about when he sleeps? Something like that would have looked pretty dumb had we listened to the precious fan base. Nor do you pay vast amounts for a star and then not show his face, either. It's ridiculous."

The main chore for Phelps on JUDGE DREDD was designing the Mega-City One set built on the Shepperton Studios backlot. Covering an area four times the size of Furst's Gotham City for BATMAN, it's an impressive network of streets, suspended rail tracks and neon-lit shops. There's the Bound to Please bondage boutique, the Dead Flesh Burger diner, designer drug stores and road signs saying, "Don't even think of parking here." Everything is covered in futuristic graffiti—giving the whole construction a highly realistic, if strangely eerie, feel. This outdoor set even fueled a sensational rumor which flashed around the production at one stage causing great excitement. During Summer 1994, Shepperton Studios

## DREDD ACTING ICON

**"The contribution Stallone's presence brings to the designs cannot be underestimated," said Phelps. "He is Dredd and he plays it to the hilt, with his chin out."**



Phelps gave the Halls of Justice a futuristic neo-fascist look. Max Von Sydow as Chief Justice Fargo, whose DNA was used to clone both Dredd and Rico.

was sold for \$12 million to a consortium of filmmakers toplined by Ridley Scott and his director brother, Tony. At the time the deal was being made, it was said Ridley was insisting the Mega-City One set not be destroyed but kept intact because he wanted to use it for BLADE RUNNER 2.

Phelps had heard the rumor too and, while thrilled, was skeptical about the practical reality of such a move. Architecturally speaking, Phelps decided to stick to the topography of New York when he devised the basic look of MegaCity One. "In the comic it's a rounded, horizontal place, almost like a plateau," said Phelps. "I felt we needed the familiarity of the Uptown and Downtown areas although Mega-City One is four times higher than the Big Apple is now. The thinking behind that was the population hasn't been allowed to expand laterally, only horizontally, because a wall wraps around the city to keep the Cursed Earth at bay. It's also different at the top to what it is at the bottom. The opening sequence in the film has a paroled Fergie, just off the prison shut-

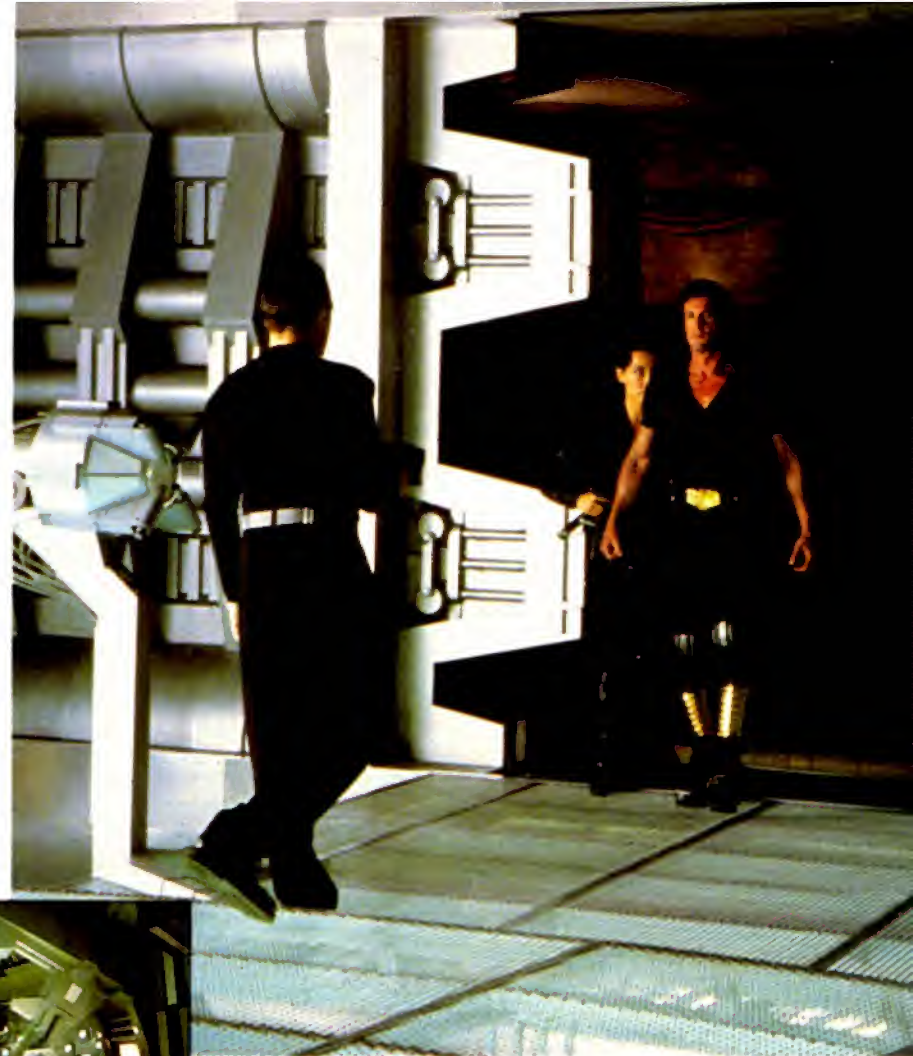
tle, taking a flying taxi ride to his new living assignment block. At first you see a thriving society frolicking around in crisp-colored METROPOLIS swimming pools on the top of vast skyscrapers. Then the taxi descends through ever decreasing levels of affluence until it lands on the rusty red, oily, dark lowlife streets. Danny cleverly puts across the whole Mega-City One atmosphere in this one moment."

Like every designer in the post-BLADE RUNNER era, Phelps has deliberately tried to eschew comparisons with that critically acclaimed benchmark. "We had the same problem on BATMAN too," sighed Phelps. "Any time a futuristic street is shown at night, washed in rain and neon, the instant pigeon-hole is BLADE RUNNER. JUDGE DREDD isn't a downer, though, and has more variety and scope mixed into that basic look. The realm is significantly different and Danny has put a heavy emphasis on daytime shots, plus magic hour shots, to dispel those BLADE RUNNER connotations. Computer graphics, which BLADE RUNNER

didn't have, will make all the difference too. We're using digital effects for the hooded architecture at the top of buildings, then turning the same design around for further texture mapping on other constructions. CGI is also being used for skyscraper reflections in mirrored windows. The retrofuture look of BATMAN and BRAZIL also had to be avoided. That's why we had to build everything from scratch. We simply couldn't put a contemporary car on the set like we did in BATMAN, where it neatly fitted in."

Building the backlot set was an interesting exercise for Phelps because he had to bear in mind the demands his designs had to satisfy in the script. Noted Phelps, "There were three distinct areas needed: a residential street, the red light area and the Downtown business district. That wasn't easy considering we really only had the use of one main street. And it was the same one Fergie lands in at the beginning, too. We had to use numerous angles to achieve each different look and, where we cantilevered out into the adjoining park, one of the taxi pad buildings was given a mirror frontage so it would appear to be twice as long from the other end of the street. Once interior sets were struck on the soundstages, we grabbed the props and structures, turned them upside down, and nailed them into empty spaces on the backlot to give us a wider choice of frontage. For example, the set had to contain the Block War sequence where residents shot at each other across roads. So another 100-foot stretch scenario had to be planned for."

As a result, Phelps was grateful to have BATMAN as a point of reference. "I learned so many lessons on BATMAN which were applied here," said Phelps. "We knew straight off how much a 600-ft-long/40-ft-high set would cost from that and budgeted JUDGE DREDD accordingly. It was such a luxury to have that experience although the main difference between the two is we've had to tie in actual interior spaces here as interior/exterior composites. That didn't apply on BATMAN." Other complex builds which fell to Phelps were recre-



Stallone invades the Janus Lab, designer Phelps' gleaming metal and glass circular chamber stacked with incubators filling up with protoplasm.

Armed with his Lawgiver gun, Dredd tracks Rico to the lab where they begin their duel to the death, as the clones ooze out to grab the lead actors.

ating the head of the Statue of Liberty for the climax and devising the Arthurian Halls of Justice set, which also transformed into the Janus Laboratory. "The Statue of Liberty was a technical challenge because it was more a problem-solving exercise," said Phelps. "What Danny wanted to stage for the finale—a flying motorbike inside a gaping hole, people hanging off structures—wouldn't actually have fit in the real Liberty head so it had to be made 20% bigger. I covered it in graffiti too."

The Lawmaster motorbikes and the Lawgiver guns were also Phelps' domain. "Both look great in the comic but once you

start translating the tough brutish style into workable models for filming purposes, it's clear they ain't gonna cut it," said Phelps. "Yet another area for the fans to gripe about! We've changed the Lawgiver guns anyway from only working when its owner's finger print pulled the trigger to firing after decoding the user's genetic DNA. Danny was very involved in the guns. He had a definite standpoint on them, as he did the costumes. The aspect that was wonderful about the Lawmaster bikes were the wide tires. Dave Vickers, a TT racer and bike mechanic, built our first prototype frame with 15-inch-

wide tires. It looked a solid weighty beast, but couldn't turn corners because the tires weren't rounded and it stood up on its own. But for roaring-down-street shots it's a visual marvel. For more practical purposes we have a less Grand Prix-looking model with a 14-inch-wide back wheel and a 9-inch-wide front one for turning."

JUDGE DREDD meant Phelps had to have his finger in every design pie from the final look of the ABC Robot to a docking bay for the full-size prison shuttle. "Keeping everything at a certain speed has been the hardest part of JUDGE DREDD," said Phelps. "There

was one period where I was working 24 hours a day and everyone kept telling me to take things easier. How could I? There was so much to do all the time. Sure, we had all the money we needed but it has been really hectic. If there was one primary thought in my head at all times throughout the making of JUDGE DREDD, it would have to be 'Depth.' Getting depth into my designs was probably more important than visualizing an exciting future landscape. For everything had to look big and imposing to ensure Danny got his 'STAR WARS meets THE LAST EMPEROR' epic quality." □

Phelps' debt to BLADE RUNNER, the neon-lit shops of Mega City One covered in futuristic graffiti, rise on the Shepperton lot. When the studio was sold to a consortium of filmmakers top-lined by Ridley Scott, rumors were rampant that Scott wanted to save Phelps' sets and use them in his planned BLADE RUNNER 2.





# JUDGE DREDD

## SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

*Joss Williams sought effects solutions that avoided computer graphics.*

By Alan Jones

Joss Williams knows exactly what got him the job of special effects supervisor on JUDGE DREDD. It wasn't his atmospheric effects for ALIEN 3, nor his Steven Spielberg connections on two INDIANA JONES fantasy adventures, or the work he did with Jim Henson on everything from THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER to LABYRINTH. Surprisingly, it was IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER and, to a lesser degree, PATRIOT GAMES which put him at the top of director Danny Cannon's wanted list. "The JUDGE DREDD script featured lots of pyrotechnics and explosions and Danny wanted it all to be as realistic as possible, considering the 23rd-century setting," said Williams. "IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER had the Northern Ireland pub bombing and PATRIOT GAMES the limousine explo-

sion. Naturally, both had to look highly authentic and that's what Danny asked for with DREDD. I hate explosions where it's obvious five gallons of gas have been added to make it look more spectacular. Even allowing for poetic license, explosions only have a minimal amount of flame. It was important to Danny that JUDGE DREDD be perceived as reality-based."

The reality Cannon wanted meant Williams had to change his thinking on the way he made cars, Lawmaster bikes and props explode. "Danny's request was to have people as near to the explosions as possible," said Williams. "Normally you'd use dummies and cheat the camera angles to create the pyrotechnic illusion they were much closer. It was the other way around on JUDGE DREDD. You put the actors/stuntmen nearer an explosion to begin with, then cheat the angles to

make them look even nearer still. When we blew up Judge Hershey's Lawmaster on the backlot, Diane Lane was five feet away from the bike when we detonated. She was in no danger whatsoever, even though the camera made it look like it was all on top of the actress, because the explosion was directed away from her. I'd never normally do anything in this way but it was a good safety problem to sort out."

Since the third week of shooting, Williams and his 35-man team have had something different to do on practically a daily basis. "The whole shoot has been an organizational nightmare in truth," said Williams. "Making sure everything is working and prepped up ready to go has taken a massive amount of planning. We've often worked through the nights so our department can have everything done that needs to be done before the



Visual effects supervisor Joss Williams (center) works on a robot, an antique cyborg from the Robot Wars.

main unit can get there, often two weeks in advance of filming." That's mainly because Williams' workload has meant unprecedented involvement in everybody else's departments. "From the outset we've been involved in more than just the physical and mechanical effects side of the production," said Williams. "For example, we've had to build weapons to the production designer's [Nigel Phelps] specifications. That meant using contemporary weapons inside his futuristic casings. Nigel would give us drawings of how he saw the finished look of the weapons complete with color and tone. We then had to make sure the real guns fitted inside his dummy casings."

Williams also found himself encroaching on costume designer Emma Porteous' territory. "During my first interview with Danny, one of our discussions concerned bullet effects and how we could achieve them," said Williams. "I told him they wouldn't be a problem and they could be any size with as much blood and gore as he wanted. Provided, I added, he kept away from two things; dark costumes and man-made fibers. So what do we end up with? Dark blue spandex costumes for the Judges! We had to have each costume repeated in cotton as a result. Spandex acts like rubber

The ABC Robot captures Judge Hershey (Diane Lane). Left: Kevin Walker's ABC Warriors comic book design inspiration.







enter) sets up the ABC Robot for its confrontation with Judge Dredd. Rico reactivates the  
rs, in a plot to murder every Judge in the Halls of Justice and replace them with evil clones.

## THE DREDD EFFECTS

**“CGI is good in its place,” said Williams. “But it can’t compare to anything in STAR WARS, which has never been bettered. And I don’t care what anyone says differently.”**

we had it finished by mid-August. Illustrator Chris Halls made an eight-inch maquette based on Danny and Nigel’s initial concept. But this had to be slightly changed when we recreated it full-size to make it as practical as possible. Certain areas of dressing and paneling also had to be streamlined. What was vitally important in the design was that there could clearly be no one inside it. That’s why we went for a six-point motion base system in the torso and neck. That way you can see straight through and realize it couldn’t possibly be a man wearing a suit.”

For exactly how the Robot was operated, Williams said, “Think back to the old Jabba the Hutt days and some of the bigger Jim Henson Creature Shop models. It was all done on a

master/slave potentiometer basis where five people operate a master set of levers off-camera and the Robot copies the movements, just like the machines on car assembly lines. It had a lift capacity of two tons and we had to make damn sure none of the actors, mainly Diane and Armand more than Sly, didn’t get too close as it had enough power to take someone’s head off. The fluidity we achieved, and the bear-like scariness, was amazing and we always had people either behind it or in the same shot, too. That was to stop anyone thinking it was either a computer graphic image or a stop-motion model. Actually though, if the Robot was considered to be a CGI as opposed to a physical element, I feel it would be a great compliment to my team.”

when a squib explosion occurs under it. It will blow but then burn up on itself which was no good for the impact we needed visually. It sounds simple but it was a major problem.”

Williams had never heard of “Judge Dredd” before hired on the project. “I purposely didn’t read the comic after being hired because I felt that would put me at a disadvantage,” he said. “I would have made a rod for my back had I tried to maintain the comic designs within my effects brief. I preferred to go along with the script and see how the storyboards looked. You can’t

create what’s in a comic physically anyway.”

The biggest special effects challenge Williams and his crew had to mastermind was one single element: the ABC Warriors Robot. The eight-foot cyborg is found by Rico in a Mega-City One Pawn Shop and reactivated into being his own personal death machine. Williams outlined how it was designed and built at a cost of \$250,000. “That’s not a lot either for the outstanding screen value we got out of it,” said Williams. “We got the go-ahead to build it on April 11, 1994 and

Filming the neon-lit street sets of Mega-City One on the Shepperton Studio lot. CGI mattes by Joel Hynek and Cinergi Effects complete the illusion.





Setting up the Statue of Liberty for Dredd's showdown with Rico. Right: Filming Rob Schneider as Fergie, fleeing before an incinerator chute fireball.

CGI technology will be used by visual effects designer Joel Hynek to create the impressive skyline of Mega-City One. But its use on JUDGE DREDD will be minimal, according to a hopeful Williams, who isn't a great fan of the new tool. "Obviously it is a terrific advancement within the industry," said Williams. "Call me biased, but rather than be used as enhancement, I find the whole use of digital effects running away with itself. Visual effects departments tend to break down scripts and put every shot they see as problematic down to do as a CGI. For example, we are currently shooting the scene with Dredd and Fergie trying to get back inside Mega-City One through an incinerator chute by outrunning a giant fireball. The initial thought was they'd shoot it clean in the chute set and CG in the deadly flames. When I found this out, I went to Danny and said, 'Look, we've been doing this stuff for years as a physical element. You want it to be as real as it can be so you really don't need to do it in expensive post-production.' He was unsure until we showed him a wildly successful test. As a result, the scene is a physical one now, not a cartoony drawing. CGI is good in its place, but that's it. It can't compare to anything in STAR WARS, which has never been bettered. And I don't care

what anyone says."

The fireball sequence was one of the few times Williams actually worked closely with Sylvester Stallone. "I don't make a point of speaking to him every day," said Williams. "He's his own person and has kept very much to himself on the set. But when he's involved with the special effects, obviously we have to talk, as I explain to him exactly what's going to happen, what he should expect and what we have to get on film. If he's kept informed and prepared, he's fine. With reference to the eight-foot-in-diameter incinerator set, we had to get Sly within 15 feet of the fireball. Testing is the key to any good effects department. We test until the cows come home, confident we'll achieve what's needed in one shot, barring camera jams or fluffed lines. Testing saves money all down the line, too, as well as putting

the actor at as much ease as you can. Guesswork is the expensive part of any production in my experience."

Williams continued, "We had to blow a set of doors the other day. All through our preliminary discussions Sly was never meant to be in the shot using his Lawgiver gun. But come the actual day, Danny wants him coming through the doors as he blows them wide open. We had to redesign the whole shot with Sly only ten feet away from the explosion with fireballs six feet above his head. We did a test to show him exactly what it was going to look like from his point of view and he was more than happy."

Part of Williams' success in pre-planning and testing shots is due to electronic advances in the special effects field. "We're using laser technology along the lines of the Robot's potentiometer feedback system to trip explosions, which avoids mistim-

ing by a body having to do it," he said. "We've also researched and developed infra-red systems for letting off bullet effects. No more setting 25 squibs in a wall and then having 25 wires trail back to a striker/nail board needing 25 contacts to set them off. Using infra-red technology, each hit has a little receiver behind it set off by a coded transmitter, like a TV remote control, only more complicated. Then you stand at the camera and aim. It saves all the crap, and the turnover time is so much quicker for doing a repeat."

JUDGE DREDD has been a dream ticket for Williams. He's had the money and the (hectic!) time to turn in what everyone is calling sterling work. He's enjoyed every minute of it, especially working with director Cannon. "Danny actually listens to what you've got to say," noted Williams. "If you have

any ideas on how best to achieve the shot he wants with camera angles, the best position, or what lenses, he's open to them. He knows what he wants but that doesn't stop him from listening to your input or suggestions if he feels they're going to benefit his shot. It's hard to believe JUDGE DREDD is only his second film! From a collaborative point of view, this film has been an incredibly rewarding experience." □

The showdown with Rico: Dredd hangs from the Statue of Liberty at his brother's mercy.



now), a corrupt Supreme Justice head who wants to reactivate the controversial Janus Project where two men were created with the DNA makeup of Chief Justice Judge Fargo (Max Von Sydow).

One became the perfect lawman, Judge Dredd. The other became a criminal defect, Rico (Armand Assante). Now, after years of incarceration at the Aspen Penal Colony, Rico has escaped, with the help of Judge Griffin, to frame his "brother" for murder so they can put into action their master plan for the future of Mega-City One's law enforcement. Perturbed by Fargo's interpretation of the recent rise in civil unrest—dubbed Block Wars—being an indication that the populace want more control over their lives without over-zealous Judge interference, Griffin feels instead there should be even tighter restrictions and aims to create more Judges using the vastly improved, and now faster-acting, Janus clone principle.

Sentenced to life imprisonment under prosecution from Judge McGruder (Joanna Miles), Dredd and Fergie (Rob Schneider), a computer hacker he won't admit judging wrongly earlier, team up with Judge Hershey (Diane Lane) and Cadet Olmeyer (Balthazar Getty) to take on Rico, his henchwoman Ilsa Hayden (Joan Chen) and a reactivated antique cyborg from the infamous Robot Wars. The finale is a fight to the death between Dredd and Rico on top of the Statue of Liberty.

More than most directors who pride themselves on their collaborative leanings, Cannon made it a point to keep his nose in every artistic area of the JUDGE DREDD production. "Part of my job was to keep the inspiration levels up," said Cannon. "I wanted to fire my heads of departments with the same excited inspiration I had when I first saw the 2000 AD comic. I had to jazz people up continuously because nobody was getting the concept. Nigel Phelps [production designer], a handful of illustrators and I sat down to visualize everything. We drew robots, Judges, costumes, the Angel gang and street signs with atmospheric music cranked up to the limit. Two

#### DREDD'S YOUNG AUTEUR

**"He reminded me of myself when I was trying to make ROCKY," said Stallone of Danny Cannon, his 26-year-old director. "This guy knew everything and more."**



Scott Wilson as Pa Angel, the head of a Cursed Earth pack of cannibal sons out of THE HILLS HAVE EYES, who beset Dredd after his prison escape.

weeks into shooting and many on the crew still hadn't grasped what DREDD was all about. We got to week ten on the Mega-City One backlot when we finally started getting through. 'Oh, now we see,' they said, 'We've got three movies all in one here.' It wasn't BLADE-RUNNER, BATMAN or BENG-HUR, though. It was something entirely different. And it takes an enormous amount of money to make something different. Which is why people tend to liken it to something else in the desperate struggle for a hook to hang it on, a frame of reference they can be comfortable with. I loathe that."

**I**n 1994, JUDGE DREDD began principal photography on August 3 at Shepperton Studios in London where the MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN sets were struck to accommodate the Mega-City One backlot construction. The crew often worked seven days a week to finish the film by mid-December so the visual effects could be added during post-produc-

tion in Los Angeles to meet the late March 1995 completion deadline. All the visual effects work was carried out by Joel (PREDATOR 1 & 2) Hynek at the Cinergi Effects facility in Lennox, Massachusetts.

"How to get the best out of everything within our means meant we decided early on to form our own visual effects company," said producer Beau Marks. "One of the single biggest expenses on a film like JUDGE DREDD is the visuals. Rather than be at the mercy of name sub-contractors we wanted everything to be part of the Cinergi organization. So we formed our own visual effects company, bought loads of equipment from Douglas Trumbull, upgraded it, and hired the finest personnel who are also working on the other Cinergi releases THE SCARLET LETTER and DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE."

This value-consciousness meant Marks also vetoed Stan Winston's early involvement in the production. "I went to Winston to budget our Robot," said Marks. "After all, he had created the ultimate one for T2. But

he asked for an astronomical amount of money disproportionate to what our special effects supervisor Joss Williams claimed he could achieve in house with a few extra crew members. Williams convinced me he could build it using the same idea as the Power Loader he devised for ALIENS. He built it for a fifth of what Winston wanted from off the shelf pieces using mechanical concepts he'd learned in the past. We used it more in the finished film than we intended because it was so good. If I'd gone with Winston we couldn't have afforded half the effects we eventually got."

Cost and quality were again the two reasons why Marks chose Shepperton Studios as JUDGE DREDD's home for its entire 22-week shoot. "Once I came on board I started investigating where exactly was the best base for DREDD," said Marks. "Hollywood was the easiest place of all, but I looked at Eastern Europe, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Canada and Australia before settling on the United Kingdom. JUDGE DREDD needed a high degree of sophistication I didn't feel we'd get anywhere but England. Being able to count on the sort of seasoned and driven professionals you find in the British film industry satisfied all my major concerns. Shepperton certainly wasn't the cheapest place but, averaging everything out, it became the best place."

There would have been trouble if JUDGE DREDD had been filmed anywhere but England, according to Danny Cannon. "Judge Dredd is British, I live in London, it's the place I feel happiest, my mates are all here and we have the best technicians in the world," said Cannon. "I listened to all the other alternatives. Los Angeles would have added at least \$20 million more to the budget. Mexico would have been a disaster. Australia always looks like Australia. And then there was Andy's suggestion of filming in his native Hungary because it was all set on soundstages anyway! I fought hard for Shepperton and I won person by person. I also feel you owe it to your own industry to plough back the



Stallone as Dredd: guinea pig for an English study on movie violence.

## WERTHAM REVISITED

There's once facet to JUDGE DREDD which hasn't been publicized at all and yet it has more far-reaching consequences than any future box-office returns, merchandise profits or "Top 50" placements. For the first time ever a major research project into the possible effects of movie violence will center on JUDGE DREDD. Doctor Martin Barker, of the University of the West of England, Bristol, has been given a British Government grant for his 18-month project to study audience reaction to the movie starring Sylvester Stallone as the trigger-happy future cop.

The hot issue of how much movie violence begets real violence still rages in many coun-

**Do real-life kids imitate art? A British study will use JUDGE DREDD as a new litmus test.**

tries where supposedly copycat crimes have been committed by children after watching certain films. Comic books and science fiction fans may recall the infamous research of Frederic Wertham, whose scientifically questionable studies and conclusions resulted in congressional interest which ruined the comic book business in the '50s.

Barker will test the violence theory out again using JUDGE DREDD as the litmus test. Barker is the best person for this job because he wrote and edited two highly influential books on the subject in both the movie and horror comic mediums. *A Haunt of Fears* was his incisive expose of the Communist campaign accusing EC Comics of corrupting children and *The Video Nasties* was his equally revealing look at how British self-interest pressure groups caused moral panic over extreme gore films in the early '80s.

Clearly, both the comic strip and movie violence subjects collide neatly in JUDGE DREDD. Barker said, "I believe we need some reliable knowledge in this area. The popular press makes assumptions but we just do not know whether there is a link." Barker's research project will begin with selected preview screenings and then continue throughout the entire money-making life of JUDGE DREDD theatrically and on video and cable.

Alan Jones

### DREDD'S DANNY CANNON

**"I wanted JUDGE DREDD so badly that nothing, not even Stallone, was going to get in the way of my ambition," said Cannon. "My passion was much bigger than his."**

generous American investment."

Or he did. After taking criticism for his anti-British comments during release of *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* squarely on the chin, Cannon found himself at the center of a whole new smear campaign while hard at work on *JUDGE DREDD*. The industry grapevine was working overtime with rumors flying that Cannon had been removed from the production and that Stallone was really directing the movie. Noted Cannon, "It hurt so much. I can't tell you how upsetting it was. It's horrible enough reading a bad review, yet you grit your teeth and don't let it get to you. But when someone says 'Oh, he's been fired,' you just want to go to their house and kill them. One day I'll find out who the fucking cunt was who started that story and I'll stick an ice pick in his eye. It was only when Andy and Sly told me they'd heard the rumors too, and we pissed ourselves laughing about it, that I could lighten up about the whole subject."

Continued Cannon, "That bitchy, backstabbing and bigoted arrogance is exactly what's hurt the British film industry. It doesn't change anything. It just makes us stand still. While there's this old school intelligentsia who fool themselves they're running a film industry, the rest of Britain is off watching *SPEED* and *FORREST GUMP*. America may have a bandwagon mentality but it sure pays off commercially. Our industry mavens sit in their private clubs spending their development money on buying rounds of drinks. Then along comes this 27-year-old director, with a track record of nothing but a low-budget thriller, who brings \$69 million plus into the coffers. Nobody says 'Well done. Thanks for bringing work into the country for our boys.'

No, instead of jumping for joy, they say, 'He got fired' in the hope it will come true because otherwise it makes them look like the lazy cunts they actually are. Fuck them all. I'll make my next picture in the States." Still on the same subject Cannon said, "If I'd been fired, *JUDGE DREDD* would have screamed to a halt. No one else would have known what to do. It's my vision and if it's a boxoffice flop it will be entirely my fault."

Apart from this personal glitch, *JUDGE DREDD* has progressed in a smooth enough fashion for Cannon. "Keeping my energy level up has been the hardest part of the whole experience. It has been terribly taxing. You know, I think of everyone I've ever slagged off in the past for making mediocre movies. Never again. It's the easiest thing in the world when you are tired to put the camera in the right direction, shout 'Action,' and walk away. I can understand now why directors sometimes do that. Loving *DREDD* as much as I do has made me keep my focus and put in the extra time that's needed to take it beyond that level. I'll never make a movie with this long a shooting schedule again, though."

Added Cannon, "The only real pressure I've felt has been from the money men. After all I am spending a fortune of other people's money. On low-budget movies you learn how to make ends meet. *THE YOUNG AMERICANS* helped me here because I wasn't fazed if I lost a Louma crane. What you learn on mega-budget pictures is politics. I respect the financiers' nervousness as much as my own but I'm willing to fight them over everything. If they could talk me out of it, I shouldn't be doing it in the first place. Another difference is when they see the rushes. They don't come



# JUDGE DREDD

## COMEDY RELIEF

### *Rob Schneider on playing Dredd's sidekick Fergie.*

By Alan Jones

"I'm a coward, the one who screams in horror as he squirms for survival. JUDGE DREDD would be a bleak movie without me. I add the humanity to the mix as the Everyman. You watch events through my terrified eyes as everyone else is so numbed by the violence around them." So speaks actor Rob Schneider about his role as Fergie, Judge Dredd's accidental sidekick. The instantly recognizable comedian from the repertory cast of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE has already made his indelible mark in various movies, including THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES, NECESSARY ROUGHNESS, HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK and SURF NINJAS. And, of course, DEMOLITION MAN with Sylvester Stallone.

"Sly wanted me to do this picture, although quite why I don't know," said Schneider. "If you had to pick a character for me to play, I doubt whether it would be someone like Fergie, someone who'd sell his own mother to survive, someone constantly afraid for his life. Throughout the course of events, Dredd helps me become more courageous. In turn, I help him become a little more understanding and human."

It's Fergie who is center stage when JUDGE DREDD opens. He's just been paroled from the Aspen Penal Colony and is being taken to his assigned living quarters in the worst part of Mega-City One. As Fergie's hopes for a bright start to his new future sink as low as the hover car transporting him through the descending social strata of the manic metropolis does, his luck gives out altogether when he arrives at street



Inside the Statue of Liberty with Diane Lane as Judge Hershey and Stallone as Dredd. Schneider as Fergie (l) adds SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE humor to the mix. Right: Schneider's comic book inspiration made an honorary Judge by Dredd.

level during a Block war. "I'm hiding from the police in a robot supermarket cart when Dredd finds me and instantly judges me as a guilty accessory," said Schneider. "I try to argue, but he still throws me back in prison for another five years. It's when Dredd gets wrongly convicted himself that he begins to understand how unfair the system actually is. After we meet up in the same prison, the JUDGE DREDD roller coaster ride really takes off."

Schneider noted that he and Stallone had a "nice chemistry," but complained, "I am getting a little black and blue from him constantly punching my arm out of friendly rapport!" Schneider also got bruised from a lot more. Recalled Schneider, laughing, "I complained when I had to fall down a metal flight of stairs the other day and Sly leaned over and said in a deadpan monotone voice, 'Action movies are hard.' So much for sympathy! But I am going to the gym every other day to keep in shape. Otherwise I'd never have lasted the course after the first week."

Not that he's really having to act, either. "The fear you see is real," he admitted. "I suffer from vertigo and there are a lot of scenes involving great heights. Dangling from ropes is a strain too, let me tell you. How Sly does it in every movie, I don't know. There's one scene with Pa Angel that has us both dangling for three minutes and had to be done in one take. All the way through I was sweating and thinking, 'I'm not going to make it.'"

Then there was the fireball stunt in the incinerator chute. Schneider recounted it in the dry manner he's become famous for. "Blue tape was put down to mark where I had to stand in the scene and orange tape for Sly in front of mine. However, in the tests I noticed the fireball effect came right up to the orange tape. Excuse me! Am I just going to get burned to a crisp or what? Before we started the scene, we had this anti-retardant fire-resistant gel put on the backs of our necks; trucks-full for Sly, a teaspoon for me! Then, just as Danny [Cannon] was about to call action and we began running,

Sly whispered, 'Fire has no conscience.' Talk about scary. I've never acted less in my life and that's the truth."

Physical abuse and masochistic humor is what Schneider and Stallone's on- and off-screen relationship was based on during the shoot. Schneider said he didn't mind the fact that "Sly would literally frighten me into getting a take right sometimes." Schneider added, "Everything was for the picture. Neither of us could take a chance on the chemistry between us not working. I had to get over



being intimidated by him on numerous levels. I had to be able to hold my own as a lot of the humor is situational at Dredd's expense. For example, the cannibal Angel family are trying to eat us and I'm selling Dredd out trying to save myself. But there comes a time when Fergie realizes, while it's dangerous to be with Dredd, it's extremely dangerous to be without him. Both need each other and it was hard to mix the Orwellian flavor of the JUDGE DREDD story with the light-hearted, fast-paced humor of a kind where you're not sure if either are kidding or they're being deadly serious." □

out of the screening room saying the usual things like, 'You must be really pleased.' No. They stagger out going, 'Thank God. Thank God.'"

Danny Cannon knows JUDGE DREDD is bound to make his reputation on the international movie front, but he noted, "That's the kind of talk that's wearing me out. I'm not comfortable being told I'll be world-famous after DREDD and I'll be able to write my own ticket as a result. I love making movies. I believe in it. It's my job. I'm not turned on by the glamour of it because all that went years ago. What I'm doing here is exactly what Paul [Hills, friend and director of the low-budget social drama BOSTON KICKOUT, which Cannon has executive-produced concurrently with DREDD] is doing, except on a much, much larger scale. I also have a whole future ideology to sell to an audience in the first 15 minutes. That's all. I'll tell you this, whoever directs the second JUDGE DREDD movie will be laughing, because I've set up the whole believable aesthetic. The next director can take it for granted and simply get on and tell his story." □

At the mercy of Rico (Armand Assante), Dredd dangles from the ruins of the Statue of Liberty.



## LINE PRODUCER BEAU MARKS

*Shepherding the comic book epic to the screen for Cinergi's Andy Vajna.*

By Alan Jones

"The audience must never question what they see," is the motto by which producer Beau Marks has lived with regards to JUDGE DREDD. "My dictate to everyone has been erase the line between fantasy and reality," said Marks. "We are making a comic strip movie but that doesn't mean it has to be a cartoon. Believability is the key. The computer graphics that will overlap our standard special effects will be as invisible as the blurring of genre elements in JUDGE DREDD. When science fiction movies leave the Earth, anything is possible because the laws of physics change and you can travel to distant worlds. JUDGE DREDD is set in New York of the future so a grounding in reality is vital to the story."

That's why the exaggerations in the actual comic strip had to be excised for the movie. "You could not do a literal adaptation of the comic on screen as the strip has this ability to be completely arbitrary," said Marks. "We had to figure out completely from scratch how this world came about and why it's like it is now. Sure, we took cues from the comic book but we had to expand on them to make it a credible world for the production to manage. To anyone upset about us changing the Dredd character I'd say he was as close as possible to



Marks (r) on the set, reviewing takes with Cinergi's Andrew J. Vajna, the former Carolco exec who saw the project as a "film event."

the comic rendition if you extrapolate the notions of who he is. Dredd belongs to a political system that came about through chaos. The world needed order. The police became judge, jury and executioner to expedite the legal system. We kept all that and what Dredd represents but turned the screenplay into a politically driven story about what happens in a system like this one when it turns its back on its own top cop to expedite justice. We establish Dredd as a model hero who everyone looks up to. But the system decides it needs a scapegoat in order to justify making further conservative changes. So

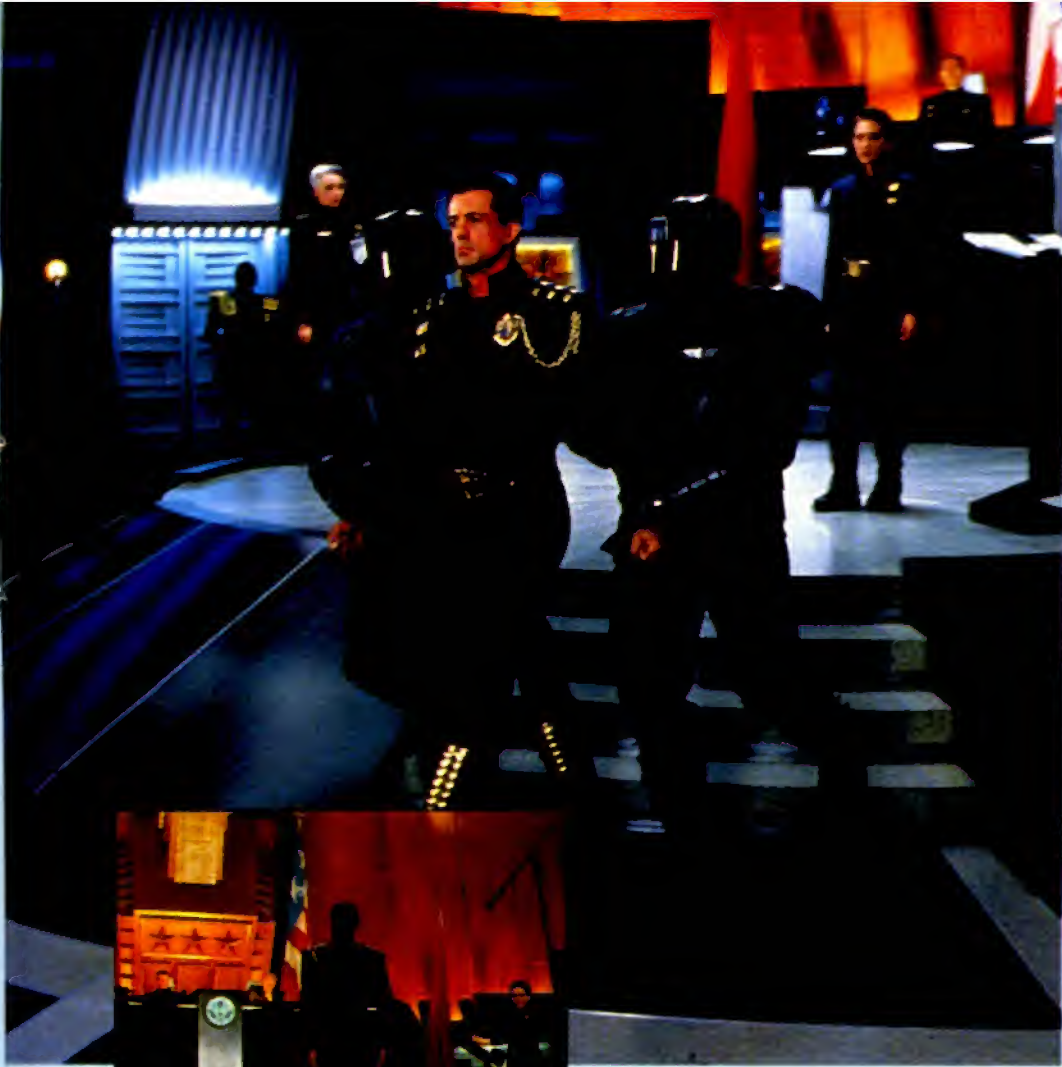
Dredd becomes the victim and must not only learn what a fair system actually is but also why it's important to have one."

The only comment Marks will make about the length of time it has taken for JUDGE DREDD to reach the screen is, "It hadn't been developed along proper lines to attract a major star like Sylvester Stallone. Also people read a script cold and they often need a vision to go along with it. That's why we had designer Chris Halls visualize the philosophy and the politics of the script so anyone reading it would get what the complete picture was all about. Anyone who read the script got the visuals for background purposes.

Scripts of futuristic movies are rarely interesting in themselves unless you can physically manifest the atmosphere. We felt compelled to do that here. Because the background texture was so complex I did at one time suggest we make JUDGE DREDD 1 and 2 back to back. But I was quickly voted down on that. As cost-effective as it would have been, it was a huge initial investment. Now I think everyone has seen the sense in that suggestion. Each contract, Stallone's included, allows for a sequel and it is currently being written now."

Not that the script was locked down completely once

**“My dictate to everyone has been to erase the line between fantasy and reality,” said Marks. “We are making a comic strip movie but it doesn’t have to be a cartoon.”**



Framed for murder, Dredd is tried in the Halls of Justice, convicted, stripped of his judgeship and then sentenced to a life of imprisonment.

principal shooting began. “Sly added some of his own character dialogue and once we got to the sets, and found other opportunities to exploit, we wrote in additional information,” said Marks. “The story structure never changed, though. For example, one of the Angel gang is Mean Machine, deformed by his father and created by junk in the Cursed Earth. When we finally saw him on set we decided to expand his sequence and make him more a part of the text because he was so spectacular. We shot for two extra days than was scheduled because he looked so brilliant.

It would be stupid of me as a producer not to recognize the value of such a character or expand it in that way.”

Taking such risks is a part of the whole process, in Marks’ estimation. “Why do the safe thing all the time?” he said. “That’s why I’m pleased with the choice of Danny Cannon as director. If we’d chosen anyone else JUDGE DREDD would be two thirds less exciting than it is now. It was his passion for Dredd which sold me on him being the right man for the job. Passion is far more important than absolute knowledge in moviemaking. Absolute knowl-

Diane Lane as Judge Hershey, astride a Lawmaster bike, out to clear Dredd.



edge in a lazy director is worthless, whereas passion will always find the knowledge to make something work. That was true with our production designer Nigel Phelps, too. He’s never designed a movie before, yet his work here has been extraordinary for exactly the same reason. Nigel was so dedicated he worked 24 hours a day to make this movie happen and design the backlot set. After nine months I ordered him to take some time off or he would have been no use to anyone. The JUDGE DREDD crew are all very talented, driven and conscientious.”

So are the cast, according to Marks. “Armand Assante was perfect to play Stallone’s brother Rico and next to each other they look very similar. He has a powerful charisma that’s both sexy and evil. He convinced me he was the sort of person who could make a pact with the devil. We tested numerous women with Sly to play Judge Hershey and Diane Lane proved to be the most natural, the most at ease with him. As for Max Von Sydow as Judge Fargo, who else could you possibly choose to represent a figurehead of respect? He is in essence Dredd’s father, which is why we had to change Sly’s eyes with blue contact lenses to match Max’s. Jurgen Prochnow has a polite manner which suited the part of the corrupt Supreme Justice. He’s bad but not evil because he firmly believes in the wrong philosophy. I see Jurgen’s character in the same way as President Nixon. Rob Schneider brings a light humanity to the role of Fergie, Dredd’s sidekick. He skirts beautifully the fine line between being outrageously funny and poignantly funny.”

Marks said JUDGE DREDD is aiming for a PG-13 rating.

“There is the Mattel merchandise to think about...The violence in JUDGE DREDD isn’t gratuitous, though. Where everyone saw the original script in action terms, I saw it as suspense. Action happens in front of the actors whereas suspense happens behind them. It’s the difference between being assaulted by the spectacle of DIE HARD 2 or being put on the edge of your seat by the thrills of DIE HARD. Here, we have suspense that furthers our story. The action background doesn’t overtake our characters. I think JUDGE DREDD falls between BATMAN and ROBOCOP with an even harder edge than the latter. We are also more human. If BLADERUNNER captured Los Angeles of the future, JUDGE DREDD will do the same for New York. Except we aren’t as one-note serious as BLADERUNNER was. You’ll laugh and cry at the overall spectrum of humanity in JUDGE DREDD.” □

Jurgen Prochnow as Judge Griffin, the corrupt Supreme Justice who teams up with Rico to frame Dredd.





# MORTAL KOMBAT



**The game that revolutionized gaming and caught the attention of Hollywood.**

*By Robert Garcia*

The success of William-Midway's Mortal Kombat is unparalleled in the video game industry. Other prominent home market games sell in the \$250,000-\$450,000 range, if they are very lucky. The first Mortal Kombat game has sold over six million copies. Its sequel, released in September 1994, climbed to three or four million sales in just under a year. You'll also find 50,000 Kombat (I & II) machines in arcades while most other games never break 10,000.

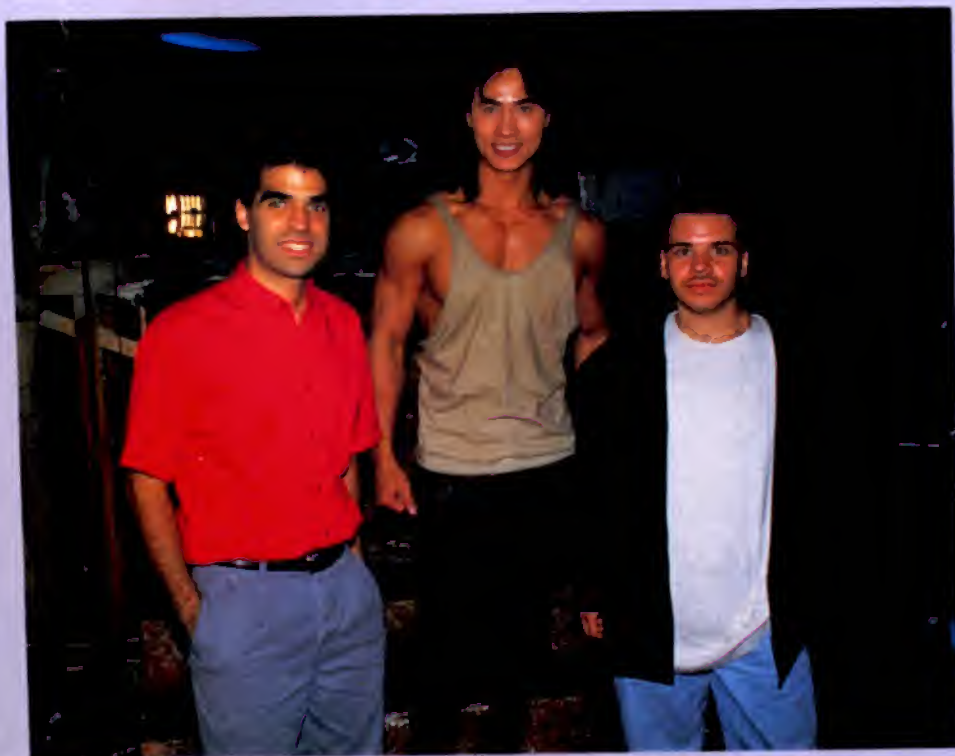
But the game is more than a financial success. Mortal Kombat has achieved a place in popular culture. When Mortal Kombat III arrives in arcades in April, Threshold Production's first Mortal Kombat animated video feature will be in stores. And their feature film will follow on August 18th, delayed because their distributor put up the extra money for more extensive post-production effects. There is also a novel due out by Jeff Rovin and countless other spin-offs.

The characters of the third edition (l to r) Sub Zero, Sheeva, Sindel, Knight Wolf, and Sektor, designs by Tobias. Top Left: Filming Kerry Hoskins as Sonya Blade.

Bottom: Game creators Tobias (l) and Ed Boon visit the set in Hollywood with Robin Shou as Liu Kang.

This multi-media monster is driven by a martial arts tournament game created by two young men in their twenties who had enough savvy to know exactly what other young men would want to play. Together, artist John Tobias and software designer Ed Boon have created an unstoppable legend with millions of fans worldwide.

The original Mortal Kombat game was designed as a quick







Filming blue screen images for MORTAL KOMBAT III, due to hit arcades at the end of April. John Turk as Sub-Zero. Insets: Mystical Kombat on the game screens.



Above: Game creator John Tobias outfits Sal Davita as Sektor, one of III's new combatants, costumes by Cindy Mianates. The first game sold over six million copies.

release to fill a hole in Williams-Midway's production schedule. But its clever designers, Tobias and Boon saw an opportunity to challenge the competition's game, Street Fighter by capitalizing on their own company's expertise. "Williams had done a lot of games using videotaped live actors, but not as huge images on the screen," said Boon. "The success of all the other fighting games convinced us

that we could combine the two and come out with a very cool game."

They put an actor in costume and filmed a few martial arts moves with a video camera. The videotape images were digitized using custom software and a sample of the action was made. Once they showed it around the company, management became very excited about the idea and Mortal Kombat was on its way.

Tobias and Boon then created the framing device of Shang Tsung's martial arts tournament in the Outworld, another dimension. Players assume the identity of one of several martial artists vying for a chance to destroy the four-armed giant Prince Goro and his master Shang Tsung before they invade our world. There is a whole pantheon of contestants to choose from, each one inspired by Japanese

mythology or martial-arts movie stars or other action flicks. The now-famous characters of Sonya Blade, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Raiden, Liu Kang, Johnny Cage and Kano are pitted against one another in a blindingly fast game of martial arts action.

Tobias and Boon enlisted a number of actors and friends to don the costumes and do some very simple moves in front of



# MORTAL KOMBAT

## THE MOVIE

*Will game fans miss the fun of going for the jugular?*

By Douglas Eby

With both character and story ties to the infamous and successful arcade game, the new feature film MORTAL KOMBAT pits martial arts fighters against evil superhuman enemies in a realm called Outworld. The characters include Thunder God Rayden, played by Christopher Lambert, who guides three mortals on a journey to defend the future of humanity: Liu Kang (Robin Shou), Johnny Cage (Linden Ashby) and Sonya Blade (Bridgette Wilson). They have to confront a variety of enemies and forces led by evil sorcerer Shang Tsung (Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa), including the multiple-armed Shokan Prince Goro. The mortals are joined in their quest by 1,000-year-old Princess Kitana (Talisa Soto), who wants to assume her Outworld throne, and re-establish beauty and tranquility in the desolate world. New Line Cinema opens the film nationwide August 18.

Producer Larry Kasanoff of Threshold Entertainment is gratified about the way the film has turned out. "This is the movie we thought up and designed," said Kasanoff. "We had a strong idea of what the movie was, and it's not just action and special effects. It's a great story about human beings facing their greatest fears, looking into themselves and learning to trust themselves to conquer any adversary. Every single person on the movie—the actors, the director, me and the set designers—was intrigued by our script, which permeated the whole film."

Kasanoff is clear about the orientation of the film. "Our goal is not to preach self-belief, rather it's to make a really entertaining movie, which we've done," he said. "But there's a strong underlying story which says, 'You can do it if you believe it.' It's done in a really fun, cool way."

Recognizing the arcade game that inspired the film has been an outstanding success, Kasanoff noted, "People from 8 to 30 play it, a pretty broad audience." He's optimistic about the prospects for the film, based on the game's broad acceptance. "It will be targeted even broader than that. Clearly our core is an action adventure audience, but there's a good theme and a lot of sci-fi mystery and magic, and two really strong female characters."

Finishing his work as executive producer for STRANGE DAYS will mark the end of Kasanoff's formal association with Lightstorm, James Cameron's company, for which he pro-



The movie's Sonya Blade is played by Bridgette Wilson, who leads her team only to discover that Mortal Kombat is a tournament not about death but life.

duced TERMINATOR 2. With MORTAL KOMBAT Kasanoff is striking out on his own and is enthusiastic about what the project means for his new company. "It's a lot more than a movie," he said. "It's an animated video special, a live-action tour that we're doing, a series of toys and merchandise licenses, a making-of-the-movie book, a novelization of both the movie and, separately, the underlying story. It will one day be a live-action TV show, and an animated series. All that stuff is in the works or has already happened. MORTAL KOMBAT is more than a video game we turned into a movie. It's a phenomenal story we are cross-publishing in every medium that exists. That's what I formed the company to do. It's not just a movie, it's a way of life."

The forbidding realm of Outworld: New Line's movie version draws upon the game's characters and mystical backstory which made it such a popular hit.



Alison Savitch, the visual effects supervisor for Kasanoff on TERMINATOR 2 and now for MORTAL KOMBAT, is enjoying the experience of working on the project, even if the budget is significantly lower. "Obviously I'd like to have more money to have lots of amazing effects," she said. "But I'll have enough of them to tell the story. At one point I was concerned about the number of effects we'd have, but New Line gave me a reasonable budget. They know what it takes to make effects films work."

Savitch is also serving as the film's associate producer. "That's exciting for me because I often work on a film with effects that never get integrated into the movie," she said. "Sometimes they fit and sometimes they don't. The story shouldn't be motivated by the effects. Let them be something that helps tell the story—don't throw in an extra effect for the heck of it and then pull the people out of the story. I want to tell a great story. The script has to be good. Even without any effects in it, you have to make it work. We're taking the concept that works for the game, taking the characters that everyone loves, and taking them out of the two-dimensional realm and bringing them into the three-dimensional. The effects don't just hit people and they roll over, but they replace the violence." □

the video camera. As with the initial test, the Hi-8 tape was then digitally transferred into the Williams-Midway computer system of customized hardware and IBM machines. Tobias went to work visually altering the video images of actors, and Boon started working on the interactive software that lets players compete not only against the game but also their friends.

The premise of the game is simply to enjoy fighting and hopefully trouncing your opponent. The fun really starts when you discover the hidden moves that give your character super powers to use against enemies. When you push the joystick and press the game buttons in a certain combination, your character's secret power will be deployed. These range from freeze rays to spear tosses to magical bursts of power. After the basic game mechanic was settled upon, it came time to add those tricks to each of the characters.

The other development crews of Williams-Midway joined in, making suggestions as they played it. Boon remembered, "People would come in while we were playing the prototypes and make suggestions. You could tell when a cool idea came up, because everyone went 'Yeah!' Then we'd get right on it and make it real." The hidden moves fuel a plethora of magazine articles and computer bulletin boards that detail the secret key strokes and add to the fanatical pursuit of the game.

Adding to the mystique, creators Tobias and Boon developed a back story for the action. Various story elements are revealed during the video scroll that runs while no one is playing the game at the arcade and also during each character's end-game sequence. Tobias, formerly an artist on the *New Ghostbusters* comic, wrote and produced a comic book detailing the setup of the tournament which could be ordered from the game company.

"We wanted to have a strong story for each character because we wanted the customer to be able to get involved with the people they were playing, and we were very successful," said Tobias. "Any kid that you ask will know all the intricacies of each character and why they are

**"We knew we wanted to do shocking and violent stuff," said Boon, the software designer. "When you have the capabilities you want to explore them."**



The game's fearsome four-armed Shokan Prince Goro, the undefeated champion of *Mortal Kombat*, rendered for the movie as an animatronic special effect by Amalgamated Dynamics (*ALIEN 3*) and kept under a veil of secrecy, as if the effect will be anything new to millions of game players.

at the tournament. They know, for instance, that Sub-Zero killed Scorpion and now Scorpion is back from the dead for vengeance."

During the game's development, Tobias and Boon decided they would do something radically different and make the one-on-one combat really mortal combat, pushing the boundaries of industry standards. Contestants would be pushed into acid rivers, impaled on spikes in the ceiling, have their heads cut off and more. All the violence and deaths are lovingly depicted in splashes of bright red blood, and when the characters are killed, red letters spelling "Fatality" appear over the victim. These Fatalities have become a big hit with players.

Boon explained that the gimmick grew naturally out of the design. "We knew we really wanted to do some shocking and violent stuff," said Boon. "So the breaking arms, loud cracking sounds, and shaking screens were always a part of the plan. But we didn't know we wanted a feature called Fatalities. It just evolved out of

our reaction to other video games who let their players take a free hit on their opponent by making the character dizzy during a fight. We felt that cheated the players and wanted *Mortal Kombat* to be fair. In our fights, only after one of the characters is defeated can the other player execute this nasty and cool death move.

Boon is well aware of the controversy surrounding the game's violence. "We are not fanatics about the violence," he said. "When we took that route, it was because we had all this extra ability to portray those images on video and when you have those extra possibilities you explore them. You want to push the envelope, and be shocking."

Added Tobias, "It was so unplanned that we didn't even storyboard them initially, we just added them into the game. The first that management saw of it was when we did sample shots. We would call them down and they would ask us whether we crossed the line. We would say, 'Yes we did, but this is cool.' And they backed us."

The company has continued to back them through a storm of protests that even brought condemnation during a meeting of the Senate Subcommittee on Video Game Violence. Boon believes that most of the problems stem from people's confusion about the target audience. "We have an older audience than most arcade games, mostly 16-year-olds to college-age guys," he said. "We aren't designing



Character design by John Tobias.

for eight-year-olds. Even though I have to admit that now that it has become so popular, they play the game."

Boon also bristles at people condemning the game's realistic violence: "We hear people say that the fighting in *Mortal Kombat* is so realistic, but it's not at all. Realism is boring. If every character jumped as high as a normal human, I don't think anyone would be playing this game."

Nintendo toned down their version of the first game while Sega's version left all the Fatalities and violence intact. Some industry-watchers believe this to be the reason Sega took the lead away from Super Nintendo in the home market. "Nintendo took a serious hit in sales," said Boon. "Super Nintendo was a better machine but the kids' per-

better machine but the kids' perception was that Sega was cool, because it had the real Mortal Kombat in it. Now with Mortal Kombat II, Nintendo has left everything in."

While the programming was being done, the other members of the modest Mortal Kombat design team were working hard. Computer artist John Vogel painted the game's backgrounds based on Tobias' sketches. Curt Chiarelli built the stop motion animation miniature for Goro, and Dan Forden produced the audio soundtrack, writing the music and recording the sound effects. They were the smallest design team at Midway and broke company records in speed and performance. They delivered a test game in five months. When it was tested at various arcades in Chicago, it drew huge crowds. Based on the response, the president of the company added six more weeks to the production schedule.

Boon remembers his reaction to the game's success. "When the game first came out it was as cool as you could possibly imagine," he said. "John [Tobias] and I had created this from conception to completion doing the majority of the work. Working with our very small team of John and Dan [Forden] made it very special and personal. But it got way out of hand and we got so bombarded by it that I just got numb. I used to buy every magazine and read every article. Now I see it on the cover of a magazine and often I don't even buy it."

Tobias and Boon really didn't have much time to enjoy the game's success. They were immediately put to work on Mortal Kombat II. More animation was needed, more characters were added, and more of the story was told. So they added a new background artist to the staff, Tony Goskie, whom Tobias holds in high regard. "Tony is a terrific painter. Ed [Boon] and I would provide him with directions and he would go nuts, giving us these incredible backgrounds."

In the middle of production on MK II, Tobias and Boon decided to change how the actors were digitized. Originally they shot the images of the actors with a Sony HI-8 videotape

**"The movie industry has a tendency to take a property and then change it," said Tobias. "We're fortunate they didn't do that. The script was dead on."**



Wined and dined by Hollywood, game creators John Tobias (l) and Ed Boon (r) with Threshold movie producer Larry Kasanoff, who made TERMINATOR II.

camera and transferred the images into the computer system. Now they hook the camera directly to the computer and place the images into memory.

On Mortal Kombat III, many new surprises have been planned. The painted backgrounds are even more elaborate, necessitating the hiring of two new art staff members, Steve Beran and Dave Mici-chich. There will be more memory in the game for more characters and battles. And two new Outworld creatures will be introduced, a centaur Motaro and a female version of Goro, Sheeva.

Tobias and Boon have decided to go for broke on the design of Motaro and Sheeva and looked to Hollywood for creature specialists to work from Tobias's designs. Initially they approached the men who did the full-scale Goro for the movie, Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis (WOLF). Fans of the game who created Goro for the forthcoming feature, they dearly wanted to sculpt the figures, but their time was tied up with Robin Williams' JUMANJI. They suggested that Kevin Yagher (CHILD'S PLAY) take on the job. Yagher was happy to com-

ply and in a matter of weeks delivered two exquisite articulated models.

Now dozens of licensors are lining up to cash in on the game's legend. And they find the game to be a licensor's dream. Instead of having to hire a staff of writers to create a backstory for the characters, Tobias and Boon have done all the work for them. And the creators are happy to provide them with guidance. Noted Tobias, "In the beginning, we sent out a short four- or five-page bible and did a lot of talking with the licensors. Charles Marshall, who does the Malibu Comics, always called us and we threw ideas around. Now he knows the characters inside and out. All the licensed products work in their own way and are pretty faithful."

Of all the licensed products, Boon is most enthusiastic about the movie, "They flew us down to California and there we were on this huge set built to emulate Shao Khan's throne room. There were these massive stairs, huge caves and throne room that were built to look like this video game we did. It was the most awe-inspiring thing I've seen."

Tobias had his own epiphany when he saw Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis' full-size Goro. "That's when the realization of how far we've come hit me. The animatronic looked so much like my first sketch of Goro. And I drew that in my bedroom of my parent's house where I grew up, and here he is in this movie."

The whole experience with Larry Kasanoff's Threshold Productions has been a happy one. At the October 1993 American Machine Operators Association Show, Kasanoff was often found playing Mortal Kombat on the trade show floor or asking Tobias and Boon questions or taking them to dinner. It was apparent that he was becoming a fan of the game and wanted to bring a slam-bang version of it to the silver screen.

Tobias recalled the producer's enthusiasm, "In the beginning, we had long conversations with Larry Kasanoff. We all went to dinner and talked about what the movie should be about and who should play the central characters. He told us that they were going to back down on the game's violence and we said great! We didn't want it rated R or want to see them rip people's heads off. It wasn't necessary for the movie to do it."

When they saw Kevin Dronney's script they noticed that many of the scenes were taken directly from their promotional comic book, impressing Tobias with its faithfulness. "The movie industry has a tendency to take a property and then change it for whatever reason and we're fortunate. Threshold didn't do that. When we read the original script, it was so dead on that we just were ecstatic. We haven't seen the final version yet, because New Line is putting more money into post-production work, but what we have seen is cool."

After the magic of Tinseltown, Tobias and Boon went back to work to make the April shipping deadline for Mortal Kombat III. Even with the comics, the movies, the cartoons, the books and all the rest, their main priority has always been the game. Tobias summed it up, "Our goal here is still to make the coolest game in the world." And for millions of fans,

# MORTAL KOMBAT

## THE TV COMMERCIAL

*Hollywood should hope their movie is as good.*

By Robert  
T. Garcia

If you were in one of the 1600 Cineplex Odeon theaters last summer, you might have seen an exciting piece of fantasy filmmaking in which outrageous characters battled their way across mythically rendered deserts, forests, back alleys and iron wrought landscapes. A female ninja, equipped with razor-sharp fans, executed a miraculous leaping kick. A bald, needle-toothed creature displayed his deadly blade arms. And it wasn't until a muscular, skull-faced man with a samurai helmet shouted his challenge of Mortal Kombat in Sensurround that you probably realized this wasn't a trailer for a film but an ad for a videogame.

Depending upon your inclination you were either crushed or excited, but you probably didn't forget it. The commercial was produced by The Red Wing Film Company in London, because RDA Advertising found that shooting there was much more economical. Producer Bash Robinson noted, "They really couldn't afford to do what they wanted in the States, and we were able to use our contacts, ask some favors and bring in the people who were able to create this weird Outworld on their budget. Especially, Bob Keen's Image Animation company for the creation of these characters. I don't know if we could do it again."

Designer/sculptor Richard Bonneywell (PROTEUS, THE OUTPOST, ANDRE) was the supervisor in charge of the IA



Outworld took shape on the largest soundstage at Shepperton Studios when RDA Advertising called on London's Red Wing Film company and director David Anderson. Inset: Image Animation readies Scorpion.

unit. He described the preparation for the shoot as being incredibly rushed "It was a nightmare schedule. The biggest problem was getting actors in for life-casting before we actually started work. Once we had the life-casts, we had about two weeks of rather intense work to get it done. We only had a small crew, so it was fairly hands-on stuff."

The task was made more arduous by the lack of good reference materials on the characters. "I did at one point see a very bad copy of screen shots on a little computer screen about three inches square which was no help whatsoever. We did all our prep work from a photocopy of a one-page spread that some computer magazine had done in the States."

He and his crew spent days submitting work to the agency for approval. Bonneywell, personally had to translate the im-

age of the steel-toothed Baraka to the screen; "Baraka was quite interesting really. A head was made for him in the States, but it was deemed unsuitable for their screen shots, because it was like this big Mister Potato-head. What they actually ended doing was rushing out to a Halloween store and buying a Nosferatu mask. Then they stuck in some big metallic teeth. I had to match it, but I couldn't very well do Nosferatu. So I had to change it slightly so it would look like theirs, but was an original face in itself."

Another character design that was much more complicated than the game's screen shots was Shao Kahn, the skull warrior. "One of the things the advertising company asked for was that the audience wouldn't see his face at all," said Bonneywell. "In the game, they used a much more human-like skull and you can actually see the

guy's mouth and jaw, a la Robocop." The shoot took four days on the largest soundstage at Shepperton studios. The stage was divided into four sets which took art director Jonathan Green and his crew three days to build. Cinematographer Dennis Crossan (THE REAL McCOY) used one Arriflex camera to do all the shooting, giving the commercial its incredible look. Bonneywell was joined by Fiona Leech and Mavis Taylor on the set to apply the makeups, and director-Red Wing founder-Oscar-nominee David Anderson put it all together.

Bonneywell had nothing but praise for Anderson on his work during and after the shoot, "He knew exactly what he wanted, and as far as I was concerned the actual commercial shoot went exactly as planned. And when we finally saw the finished film, we didn't believe it. The director did a great job." □

Cinematographer Dennis Crossan used one Arriflex for an incredible look. Baraka behind the scenes.



# INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD

By Dennis Fischer

INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD is a fantasy based on Lynne Reid Banks' highly popular 1980 children's novel. This \$45 million Columbia-Paramount co-production was filmed simultaneously with CONGO and will be Kennedy/Marshall Productions' second film of the summer. Directed by Frank Oz from a script by Melissa Mathison (E.T.), it was produced by the husband and wife team of Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy, in conjunction with Jane Startz of Scholastic Productions, who picked up the rights to Banks' book.

Like Mathison's E.T., the film concerns how a young boy, Omri (Hal Scardino) develops a special bond with a secret playmate, a plastic Indian named Little Bear (played by Cherokee rap artist Litefoot) who comes magically to life when placed in a medicine cabinet.

"It was a story that we immediately responded to when we read the book," explained Marshall, "and we know it's a very popular book with its young readers. We were lucky enough to interest Melissa Mathison, who wrote E.T. for us. It has a lot of the same feeling E.T. had as far as making it. It is a real picture that has a lot of love in it and a really wonderful story. It's a real fantasy, but an adventure as well.

"It's an adventure that you go on with this character, the character of Omri, who is the nine-year-old boy. It's a personal adventure that he goes through within himself, and we go on it with him. The cupboard brings his plastic figures to life, and I think it is a learning experience about what's important in life, so it has something to say. But it's also a wonderful adventure. This is a terrific family film and I think it's going to surprise a lot of people this summer."

Noted Oz about taking on the directing chores, "I originally didn't want to do it," he said. Oz has done his share of special effects films working with the Muppets and direct-

**Frank Oz directs the child-like fantasy by Melissa Mathison.**



Hal Scardino plays Omri, whose secret playmate, a plastic Indian named Little Bear, comes magically to life when placed in a medicine cabinet.

ing DARK CRYSTAL and the musical remake of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. "I told my agent I didn't want to do children's movies or special effects movies. I've done a lot of those, but Melissa Mathison's script was so wonderful, which led me to do it.

"At the same time, I don't think of it as a children's movie, so I'm not making it for children, and I'm just going by my instincts and hopefully making it a good movie, neither for children or adults."

Oz feels that the script was very poetic yet spare in emotions on the surface, that the story is very layered and about many things. "It's about a boy of nine becoming stronger," Oz said, "and going from dependence to independence. The Indian, without knowing it, helps him do this. He gains strength for this world. It's not an easy world that we live in anymore, and for a great part I think this movie is about that. It's about surviving in this world."

Omri has to tell someone about his secret and eventually reveals it to his friend Patrick (Rishi Bhat), who causes him to perform similar magic on a cowboy figure, creating the ornery Boone (David Keith), who tests the boys' patience and adds complications to their lives. Omri learns that creating people brings with it many important responsibilities.

"It's not really a special effects film, even though they [Little Bear and Boone] are only three inches tall," said Oz. "It's meant to be a film that has special effects, but the spotlight is not on effects, they should be just part of the story."

The special effects have been created by Industrial Light and Magic under the leadership of Eric Brevig, whom Oz credits with working wonders and creating massive rigs for the characters. Oz wasn't interested in developing contrasts with the miniature characters and the regular sized world as many fantasy films of the past have done, but wanted simply to make his unusual characters as believable as possible.

"The complexity of it is extraordinary," said Oz. "Shooting three-inch characters in the real world makes it extraordinarily complex. I've done tougher films as far as physically tougher, but I've never done a film that was more complex than this. We use three-inch characters with normal sized people, and in places you have to play a lot of games with different lens sizes."

For when a character falls one or two feet, the production had to arrange for a stuntman to fall about 65 feet into an airbag. "That gets real complex, what lenses to use, what lighting to use," said Oz. "Eric Brevig is terrific. He's the one who set up all the special effects for me so I could come in and direct the actors."

Every time a scene with a miniature character was shot, careful measurements had to be taken to shoot two or three background plates to get each composite looking right.



Little Bear, played by Cherokee rap artist Litefoot, in World War I, teaching Omri the lessons of life.

Oz resisted using oversized sets because he felt it just looked old-fashioned, so the project made extensive use of blue screen.

Apart from the boredom the blue-screen process naturally engenders, Oz noted that it made it difficult for “the actors trying to act with people who aren’t there, to have the lighting match the lighting on the real set, to be able to have the moves match the moves on the real set, to have the eye-lines match—things you have to plan extremely carefully.

“Because if you’re shooting Little Bear in the bedroom walking across the floor and looking up and you have to have the camera way up on the ceiling, and the blue screen, and have Litefoot, the actor, look up, then you have to figure out where the eye-line is, which is now, instead of six feet up, 100 feet up, and you have to figure out which lens to use, you have to go for closeups with a full 100mm lens, which is unusual.

“Blue screen at the best of times is not the most exciting shooting to do, so sometimes you just plunge ahead and do what you can with all the complexity involved in that.”

Handling some of those complex chores was director of photography Russell Carpenter (*TRUE LIES*, *LAWNMOWER MAN*), production designer Leslie McDonald (*FORREST GUMP*, *BUGSY*), costume designer Deborah Scott (*E.T.*), film composer Miles Goodman, and editor Ian Crafford (*FIELD OF DREAMS*).

While the character of Little Bear may seem something of a stereotype to those unfamiliar

with the novel, Oz was careful to ensure that he be a fully rounded character. “He’s a brave, not necessarily a warrior,” Oz said. “Many Native Americans were not just warriors but young men in their 20s who were married and had children. He is not [married] now, but he was. He was partly a healer. He is a very aware Native American. He laughs and he cries, he jokes and he gets angry, he gets tender and he gets savage just like any other human being.”

Sensitive to the concerns of Native Americans, the production had Jeanne Shenandoah, a member of the Onondaga tribe, serve as technical adviser on the film for the character of Little Bear, an Iroquois brave. She advised the filmmakers on the proper tribal rituals, ceremonies, clothing, languages and music, and had Onondagan craftspeople provide authentic silverwork and beading.

“I told her I cannot be accurate with this movie,” said Oz. “All I can do is *attempt* to be accurate. She understood that. I think we

Oz sets up a complex blue-screen shot at ILM. “I told my agent I didn’t want to do kids’ movies or special effects,” he said, but the script won him over.



“It has a lot of the same feeling as *E.T.* It’s a terrific family film with a lot of love that I think is going to surprise a lot of people this summer.”

—Producer Frank Marshall—

all feel pretty good about the relationship. We’ve done the best we can, and she understood that she had to be flexible too. I think there was a good spirit throughout. Native Americans have been kicked around and lied to so much, I’m sure she started this with great trepidation, but I think she understands that for this movie we’ve done our very best.”

Oz praised Hal Scardino, calling his performance “stunning and wonderful,” though the limitations on child actors meant that he was only able to shoot with Scardino for four or five hours a day. “He’s a sensitive, smart, terrific actor,” Oz said. “Basically, I just told him what I needed, and I told him the truth.”

The filmmakers expect that audiences will be touched by the relationships between the characters, and that the story will, in coproducer Kathleen Kennedy’s words, “appeal to the child in all of us.” Omri must learn about life and death while having an adventure in his own bedroom, a major locale in many childhood fantasies.

“It’s going to be odd because on the screen it’s just going to be this movie with two kids in a room,” said Oz, “but people have no idea what it means making the guys three inches tall. It’s been a long shoot, a satisfying shoot, but a long one.” The film was shot over a six-month period.

“There’s an old Zen saying,” observed Oz. “First you see the tree, then you don’t see the tree, then you see the tree, and that’s pretty much how I work, which means I see a script and it’s very simple and pure and it touches me, and then I don’t see the script because I’m too close to it—I see it broken apart and analyze it in bits and pieces from costumes to sets to lenses to lighting to props to acting to editing to everything. You see bits and pieces, but you don’t see the script.

“All of a sudden, it comes together and then you see the script again, but you see it put together and melded. Hopefully it has the purity of the first one, but has richness and texture on top of that. If it was successful, that’s the most satisfying thing apart from working with talented people.” □

# X-FILES

**Taut scripts make this show the best drama on television.**

*By Paula Vitaris*

Not even an alien spacecraft landing in the Beverly Hills Hilton during the Golden Globes award ceremony last January could have been a bigger surprise to the cast and staff of *THE X-FILES* than taking away that evening the prize for Best Drama on television. Chris Carter, the show's creator and executive producer, was so convinced *THE X-FILES* was the least likely choice that he wasn't even listening when Captain Kirk himself, actor William Shatner, opened the envelope and announced the winner.

"I didn't hear Shatner say *THE X-FILES*," Carter admitted. "I just sensed it. Everybody at the table sat up at once, and I thought, 'We won!' I was determined to thank everyone I possibly could, because there have been so many people responsible for the success of the show." Carter found particularly gratifying that *THE X-FILES* had won in the category of Best Drama: "It was a unifying award. It said we're the best show on TV, and everybody got to share in it equally."

*X-FILES* was up against a quartet of dramatic heavyweights (*CHICAGO HOPE*, *NYPD BLUE*, *ER* and *PICKET FENCES*), and was handi-



David Duchovny as Mulder from first season's "Jersey Devil," kneeling at the body of the "wild woman" mistakenly killed as a "monster."

capped by its nominal membership in the science fiction/horror genre, usually ignored by award-givers. Executive producer Bob Goodwin, certain that *ER* would come out on top, said that winning the Golden Globe seemed to have brought the rest of Hollywood out of the genre closet. "Everybody thought we were great but no one said it out loud," noted Goodwin, who explained the win by citing a friend, the wife of a three-time Emmy-winning director, who

told him, "All those other shows are really excellent, but none of them really break any new ground." "And we do," noted Goodwin. "*THE X-FILES* is something truly unique. It's one of those absolutely impossible circumstances in which there was a great idea, well-written scripts and perfect casting. You combine that with good execution, and it had all the earmarks of something that could be very successful and rewarding. That's what it's proven to be."

Certainly the television audience has agreed, with ratings steadily improving all through the show's run. After the Golden Globe ceremony, *THE X-FILES* posted some of its best numbers including winning its time slot for the first time with the broadcast on February 17 of "End Game," the exciting second half of a sweeps month two-parter. And no one could have been more ecstatic by the breakthrough than Frank Spotnitz, the episode's writer.

A former journalist and graduate of the American Film Institute, Spotnitz is one of three new writers to come on board the *X-FILES* writing staff for its second season. Spotnitz had come in to pitch story ideas during *THE X-FILES*' first year. Carter did not buy any, but invit-



Series creator Chris Carter picks up the show's Golden Globe.

ed him to come back and pitch again, which he did in Fall 1994. Then, Spotnitz recalled, Carter "called me back and said, 'I don't want to buy your ideas. I want you to come on staff.' It was totally out of the blue. It just floored me." Not long thereafter, Spotnitz suggested to Carter a way to bring back Samantha, Mulder's abducted-by-aliens sister, which resulted in his participation in putting together the story for the February two-parter, to include writing the second episode's script (the first episode, "Colony," was written by Carter based on a story conceived with series star David Duchovny).

Just as astonished to be on the *X-FILES* writing staff is Sara Charno, whose past credits include co-authorship of three *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* episodes ("The Wounded," "New Ground" and "Ethics.") Urged on by a friend, she had sent the script of a short film she had written to Glen Morgan and James Wong (the writing team who departed *THE X-FILES* mid-season to concentrate on the creation of their own show, *SPACE*, for Fox Network). She hoped they would be interested enough in her writing to meet with her and let her pitch story ideas.

"I didn't realize they were looking for staff positions," Charno said. "I was really re-





Flanked by his team (l to r): Howard Gordon, Rob Bowman, Duchovny, Paul Rabwin, Glen Morgan, Gillian Anderson, Robert Goodwin and J.P. Finn.

**“It was a unifying award,” said series creator Chris Carter. “It said we’re the best show on TV, and many people are responsible for that success.”**

laxed and we shot the breeze. They called me up about two weeks later and asked if I wanted to be on staff. It was definitely the fairy godmother story, the dream come true.” Her first script, “Aubrey,” was assigned after Carter told her he was intrigued with an idea she had about “genetic memory;” her second script this year was “The Calusari.”

The third new writer is Darin Morgan, younger brother of Glen Morgan, whose first credit on X-FILES came not as a writer, but as an actor, or, more accurately, a monster, when he donned an exceedingly uncomfortable costume to play the Flukeman in “The Host.” Before he did his “Host” stint, however, he had been working with brother Glen and James Wong on the second season’s third episode, “Blood,” for which he received a story credit. Morgan is self-deprecating about his job as an X-FILES scribe.

“I did the worm man and they had to fill a spot on the staff,” he noted with quiet humor. “I wasn’t very sure about wanting it. I’ve never done television or staff writing, but they offered it to me, so I’ve been here ever since.” He admitted he considers himself primarily a comedy writer, and fittingly his first solo script for X-FILES, “Humbug,” was about circus freaks, an episode which Chris Carter

called “a very funny X-File.” The episode’s director, Kim Manners, thought “Humbug” “might be the most bizarre X-FILES ever.”

Manners not only directed “Humbug” and Glen Morgan and James Wong’s final script for THE X-FILES, “Die Hand Die Verletzt,” but as of February is on staff as a producer, joining director Rob Bowman, who came on staff with a producer credit earlier in the season, after he had finished directing the episode “Aubrey.” Both Bowman and Manners are now exclusive to THE X-FILES, and when not directing in Vancouver or shepherding their episodes through post-production in Los Angeles, they assist other directors in preparing their episodes and overseeing the editing process.

Manners is a 16-year veteran of television, having begun his career with CHARLIE’S ANGELS. Since then, he said, “You name it, I’ve directed it.” His work includes “When the Bough Breaks,” a first-season episode of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION which co-starred Jerry Hardin, well-known to THE X-FILES audience as the character Deep Throat. Manners directed the pilot episode of 21 JUMP STREET, and when Morgan and Wong joined that show’s writing staff, directed several of their

episodes. They were especially impressed with his work on an episode involving a death row inmate.

“Kim did such a better job than what that script was,” Morgan recalled, and he and Wong insisted that Manners be brought in for THE X-FILES. They were delighted with the results on “Die Hand Die Verletzt,” Carter and Goodwin were too, and two months later Goodwin called to offer Manners a producer slot.

“So now I’m ‘X-filed,’” Manners enthused. “Visually the show is very challenging. To step up to the plate and direct an X-FILES, it’s just not like anything else. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson are wonderful to work with. John Bartley, the director of photography, is sensational. I couldn’t be happier. It’s like I died and went to heaven.”

Rob Bowman is familiar to genre fans for having directed several episodes in the first two seasons of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, including “Where No One Has Gone Before,” “Heart of Glory,” and “Q Who,” as well as an episode of Fox’s ALIEN NATION. Goodwin, who had worked with Bowman on MANCUSO F.B.I., brought him in to direct “Gender Bender” during THE X-FILES’ first season, and since then

Bowman has taken the helm on many of THE X-FILES’ second season episodes, including “Sleepless,” “Aubrey,” “Fresh Bones,” “End Game” and “Dod Kalm.”

Directing THE X-FILES, Bowman said, “stretches me on every level because Chris expects me to do beyond what I can do, and all my energies are focused into making better shows every time out. THE X-FILES really tries to be a movie every week, so it’s always fresh, though the work is exhaustive. It’s a new experience every time.”

Despite the changes in creative staff and attention from the mainstream media, so far THE X-FILES has not lost the moody edginess that is its trademark approach. But will a distinct style, originality, and a Golden Globe lead the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, notorious for avoiding nominating genre shows, to nominate it at Emmy time? Bob Goodwin is superstitious enough not to even want to utter the word “Emmy.”

“It doesn’t matter if you win awards or even get nominated,” he concluded. “All that does is cement the feelings you have. I just think THE X-FILES is one of the best shows on television. I say that with all immodesty, but it is.” □

Scully (Gillian Anderson) finds herself handcuffed to geologist Shawnee Smith in “Firewalker,” ravaged by a silicon-based parasite caught from spores.





The titular monsters, about to destroy the world at the climax, CGI effects designed by Tom Barham of New York's Image Design. Below: The American Pride jet enters King's time and space rift, CGI by Image Design.



# Stephen King's THE LANGOLIERS

**Turning King's Four Past Midnight story into a four-hour miniseries for ABC.**

*By Dan Scapperotti*

A jet liner carrying a full complement of passengers and crew leaves LAX on a routine flight east. Along the route several sleeping passengers awake to find everyone else, including the crew, has disappeared. Seats are covered by an assortment of personal metallic objects, including rings, bracelets and a heart pacemaker. The ten who were asleep have survived a passage through a rift in time, and begin a terrifying journey that teaches them why travel into the past isn't possible.

"The Langoliers" is part of Stephen King's anthology *Four Past Midnight*, and is brought to the small screen as a two-part miniseries by Richard Rubinstein's Laurel Entertainment. The four-hour TV movie was set to air on ABC in May. Rubinstein has been involved with the master author of horror tales for over 15 years and has produced many of King's most popular films, including *PET SEMATARY* (1989), *IT* (1991), *THE TOMMYKNOCKERS* (1993) and *THE STAND* (1994).

Rubinstein optioned "The Langoliers," King's retrospective end-of-the-world novella, three years ago. "The end of the world in 'The Langoliers' is more limited in scope," said Rubinstein, "than the end of the world as portrayed in *THE STAND*. This is more bite-size. Basically it's a popcorn movie.

**"Basically it's a popcorn movie," said producer Richard Rubinstein. "It's Steve's take on 'Ten Little Indians' meets an Irwin Allen disaster movie."**



During filming at the airport in Bangor, Maine, King (l) observes with ABC movie executive Maura Dunbar and Laurel Film producer Richard Rubinstein.

It's sort of light. It doesn't have a social underbelly to the same extent that *THE STAND* does and I always felt it was a great piece of fun entertainment. Steve's version of *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*. It's a little bit of Steve King meets Irwin Allen. His version of a disaster movie.

"I was attracted to it from a creative standpoint," continued

Rubinstein. "He [King] painted ten characters who I thought you could identify with very easily. I think that [director] Tom Holland did a great job in bringing them to life. The adaptation I feel is very faithful to the story. There are some back stories left out. Obviously you can't tell ten characters' total backstory to the same extent in a movie. I think it fits the box

very well in terms of a two-night miniseries."

Veteran horror director Tom Holland was tapped to helm the production. Rubinstein's introduction to the director dates back several years when the producer was working with Warner Bros. on a proposed film version of King's chilling novel, *Thinner*. The studio had financed the script and brought in Holland to direct the film. "Although *THINNER* has yet to go before the cameras, we developed this relationship with Tom," said Rubinstein. "Steve had always liked Tom's work in terms of *CHILD'S PLAY* and *FRIGHT NIGHT*, so when *LANGOLIERS* became real we thought what a great opportunity for us to get the relationship off the ground with Tom while we waited on *THINNER* finding its home." Rubinstein and Holland are now at work reviving *THINNER* as a theatrical film at Warner Bros.

Switching from one medium to another can be a healthy, creative transition, Rubinstein believes. "I've had a history of trying to get people to cross over between features and television," he said. "I think that while television has grown up it has also created opportunities for not only writers, but directors and everyone else who has some creative urges that they want to develop and get out.

"Mick Garris was basically not a television director when he did *THE STAND* and Tom

# Tom Holland

## DIRECTING STEPHEN KING

*The auteur of FRIGHT NIGHT on tackling the master.*

By Douglas Eby

Tom Holland directs the four-hour miniseries *THE LANGOLIERS*, adapted over a period of a year and two months by him from the Stephen King short story. Holland notes he's not sure what the title means: "I asked Steven [King] and he didn't remember where he got it from. But when I was driving along the Maine coast on the way to Canada, I passed a motel with a similar name."

The basic story, according to Holland, is that 350 people board a Red Eye flight from LA to Boston, and "Ten of them fall asleep, and wake up to find they're the only ones left in the plane, that the other 340 people have disappeared. And they have not landed. And they bust into the cockpit: nobody's driving the plane! It's kind of a four-hour *TWILIGHT ZONE*. It's much

Holland, the horror specialist who has directed shockers such as *THE TEMP* and *CHILD'S PLAY*.



Holland's ensemble cast heads for King's *TWILIGHT ZONE* (l to r), David Morse, pilot Marc Lindsay Chapman, Baxter Harris, Kate Maberly, Patricia Wettig, Frankie Faison, Dean Stockwell, Chris Collett and Kimber Riddle.

much more than that, but it's got that tone. The fun that I had watching those when I was a kid I thought people might have watching *LANGOLIERS* today."

Holland also directed the third *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* episode ever done, plus two others, and a movie of the week *THE STRANGER WITHIN*, which got a Golden Globe nomination. His extensive writing credits include *CLASS OF '84*, *THE BEAST WITHIN*, *FRIGHT NIGHT*, *CHILD'S PLAY*, *PSYCHO II* and *THE STAND*.

There is a thematic creative drive behind much of Holland's work, he feels: "A lot of what I've done that I've felt was more successful has dealt with primary fears. *LANGOLIERS* is really 'the airplane ride from hell' and I'm absolutely terrified when I fly. I'm not exaggerating, and the older I get the more frightened I get. Understandably, when you read what's been happening the last couple of years. The source material for the story is marvelous. When I read Steven's novella, it punched

every button I ever had whenever I've been in any air turbulence, or had a gust of wind throw the tail out from under you as you land. All those things. And doing the picture didn't make me feel any better about flying.

"I used the body of an L1011 that I cut up and used as a set, and I can't tell you how flimsily those things are made. They're just aluminum girders and a skin stretched over it. The big passenger jets aren't even aerodynamic anymore. The 727 or something like that could still glide, but now if those engines cut out, they drop like a rock. You have no glide at all. No chance."

When Holland isn't directing, he writes. "I probably spend 80 or 85 percent of my time here at home, stuck in a little room at the back: the smallest room I could find, facing a blank wall," he said. "I started out in back of a garage—that's where I lived a long time, and I've always tried to find places with privacy and tranquility to concentrate. When I was starting in the business in the mid '70s, the work I could

get was writing action thrillers. But after writing *THE BEAST WITHIN* I couldn't get another job for a year, until *CLASS OF '84*, which was an exploitation picture about violence in high schools, and was a success in the independent market. And off of that I got *PSYCHO II*."

One of Holland's most well-known projects, like *THE LANGOLIERS*, had its source in a common terror: "CHILD'S PLAY was a really scary movie," said Holland. "It worked off the primary fear of your playthings coming to life, which occurred to all of us at one time or another. One of my favorite TV shows was *TRILOGY OF TERROR* and there was a story called, I think, 'The Zuni Doll,' starring Karen Black. It was sensational: a little doll came to life to attack you with a little sword. Pretty horrifying. That scared me to death as a kid. So I think I knew on some psychological level that would really work."

Talking about the social effects of film and video game violence, Holland agreed it's a very complex issue. "As society takes a more conservative bent, it seems to me, the pressure on self-censorship is going on," he said. "I think it's getting much harder to do graphic horror, and I think where that will take you is into the psychological realm. You're not going to be able to rely on visual shock so much because it's going to be very difficult to get it done. Now why we all have been attracted to violence and terror as kids is a terrific question and I've read a ton of answers on it, but I don't know what the joy of being scared is.

"One thing that's interesting is that horror used to be—still is—looked on as a genre or sub-genre that wasn't acceptable



Bethany (Kimber Riddle) and Albert (Christopher Collet) are menaced by the Langoliers from outside the cabin window of their besieged L1011 jumbo jet.

when I was a kid, but there's a whole generation now growing up on FRIDAY THE 13TH, HALLOWEEN, etc., and I suspect it's now more mainstream, or at least there's a tremendous acceptance."

But that acceptance doesn't necessarily extend to critics, Holland pointed out. "Why did DEMON KNIGHT get such savage, vicious reviews?" he mused. "I could almost argue that, a priori, if you do horror you're going to get bashed in the reviews. I've certainly seen that in reviews of Steven King's work over the years. Quite often he was being attacked for the genre and not for the quality of the writing. If you were growing up—in your 20s or 30s—during the '70s, you read *The Stand*. Everybody read that book, we all talked about it. It had a tremendous impact."

Given his qualifications and successes as a director, Holland says he doesn't really know why he stays with horror: "You can argue that when you objectify your fears, you neutralize them, and you objectify them by dramatizing them. Sounds pretty nifty to me, actually."

"But I would also argue that what's interesting is not whether somebody's going to get out of the house when the killer is in there, but that it's more interesting psychologically to try to figure out how the person got themselves into the house in the first place. I mean, it's not about what's on top of so many of these things that's interesting, it's what's going on with the

people underneath. And that's hard to do, and you don't see many films that have that. It's what Hitchcock was able to do a number of times. VERTIGO was a very psychologically complex story. I don't think it's something that critics or the public is particularly aware of, but your level of involvement is a function of how well you understand, and how much you care for, the characters involved in a situation."

Talking about THE PROFESSIONAL as another example of a very engaging film, Holland noted, "What was interesting about it was you started caring about the hit man: a man who lived, probably, a hermetically sealed life, never cared about anybody or having any relationships, found himself falling in love, in a paternal way, with a little girl, and at the end sacrificed himself for her."

That concern for the nuances of character comes into play in Holland's script and direction: "I would also argue that no one is totally good or totally evil. I worked with the actors in LANGOLIERS, for example, so you get a heavy that you feel sorry for. That's interesting. Your hero and all the good people are guilty or have some dark secret."

"Confronting psychologically dark material can be seen in a positive light, but sometimes I feel I'm just basically scared to death, and paranoid and fearful, the result of being raised by Depression-era parents, and that somehow my work dispels some of that anxiety." □

**"Steve had always liked Tom's work," said Rubinstein. "This was an opportunity for us to get the relationship off the ground [in preparation for THINNER.]"**

did one television movie, but basically he's a theatrical film director. So we're now creating a sort of hybrid atmosphere. We're not hiring people who just do television or just do features. We're really trying to find people who have an enthusiasm for the work."

Rubinstein had gotten his start in the business as a theatrical motion picture producer and ten years ago would have avidly avoided television. "I thought it was low-rent," he said. "I don't feel that way anymore. It creates tremendous opportunities. I'm out there encouraging new writers and directors not to pass over television as an opportunity to hone their skills. I ran a seminar out at Sundance which was titled 'Television for People Who Want Feature Film Careers.' There are 300 TV movies a year where you can sharpen your skills."

While other film producers may avoid television like the plague, Rubinstein has taken the medium and bent it to his will in terms of adapting King's substantial novels to a cinematic format. "While we were trying to find out how to fit THE STAND into a two-and-a-half hour feature film, television grew up," said Rubinstein. "This is an extension of that as a perspective. Television is well-suited these days to tell certain kinds of stories without compromising them, without having to cut them to the bone in terms of exercising certain things that can't go on television. In terms of having a long running time, the advantages of television for certain stories are pretty strong. Especially for novelists who write long books."

Even those annoying commercial breaks, which can dampen the mood a filmmaker is trying to achieve, fail to faze Rubinstein. "The commercial interruptions on broadcast television are actually pretty similar

to the rhythms of chapters in a book," he said. "So there's a certain amount of compatibility that I've observed between novels and television, and this concept of novels for television, that's actually pretty good, if you're not faced with having to compromise the material because you can't say this or that or show this or that."

"People put down books at the end of chapters and go off. Not everyone sits there and reads for four hours straight without moving out of a chair. I think we have become acclimated to those rhythms on broadcast television. Whoever is doing the adaptation takes that into account. So you try to leave at the end of each act, break the way you leave at the end of each chapter with something to bring you back or keep you going. When we script, we script to the outbreaks. Steve did that on THE STAND and Tom did that with THE LANGOLIERS. Those rhythms are taken into account."

King consults with Laurel producer Richard Rubinstein, about to film his chairman of the board cameo.



While *THE LANGOLIERS* is basically character driven, the major set piece is the final assault of the all-consuming demons that attack the airport. Rubinstein realized that a convincing visualization of the Langoliers was important to the success of the film. "We put a disproportional amount of money into the computer-generated effects for a television movie," Rubinstein admitted. "This had a higher percentage of the budget that went toward effects than are generally done for television movie."

Obviously the extra funds had to come from other aspects

**"Steve's track record gets the audience in the door," said Rubinstein. "I focused on making a good enough movie to bring people back the second night."**



Filming the destruction of the power pylons at Image Design in New York. Inset: The effects team (l to r), supervising producer Rick Murphy, visual effects supervisor Tom Barham, effects producer Steve Meyer and digital supervisor Oliver Rockwell.

of the production and salaries for a big-name cast was one that was tapped. The production opted for a talented cast without marquee value. Among the passengers on this time-travel adventure are Bronson Pinchot as a maniac business executive; Dean Stockwell as a King surrogate, a novelist who puts the pieces in place; an optimistic blind 12-year-old girl on her way to an operation in Boston is played by Kate Maberly; and Mark Lindsay Chapman is cast as Nick, a hired assassin on his way to one last mission.

"I don't believe in this concept of a star cast," Rubinstein said a little defensively when asked about the film's seeming absence of "star" power. "We were looking for actors who could realize the roles effectively and not distract the audience. As far as acting talent goes, Patricia Wettig, David Morse, Dean Stockwell and Bronson Pinchot and the others are all good actors."

"We do have an advantage though from a marketing standpoint. Steve's track record and

reputation is a launch pad for this particular project. I don't think that even if you go to extremes with the cast you're not really going to find someone who's going to make a big difference in the want-to-see aspect of the movie because Steve gets you in the door. I was so impressed with ABC's marketing of *THE STAND* that I wasn't worried about the first night's audience showing up. I wanted to focus on making a good enough movie to bring everyone back the second night. And that has very little to do with star power. I've always been story-driven to satisfy the audience."

*THE LANGOLIERS* was shot in Maine, Stephen King's home state, and production costs were only part of that consideration. King's story takes place at the Bangor Airport and Rubinstein, who has filmed *PET SEMATARY* in the state, wanted to be as atmospherically authentic as possible.

The main set for *THE LANGOLIERS* is a real L1011 airplane. After investigating all the

available airliner sets and finding that there were no complete planes, Rubinstein and crew opted to buy the real thing. Physically the plane is the centerpiece. The production bought an engineless L1011, which was housed out in the Mojave Desert. The wings were cut off and the fuselage sliced like a loaf of bread into ten sections. They were then trucked from the Mojave Desert all the way up to Bangor, and reassembled inside a hangar at the Bangor Airport.

The sections were then hinged front to back and cut open and the sides hinged so that they could flip up like the luggage compartment on a bus. This allowed the filmmakers greater freedom in controlling their shots, with a complete L1011 that could be shot from any angle. All the oxygen masks dropped down, all of the luggage compartments opened, all of the lights worked.

"We shot almost the whole thing at the Bangor Airport with the exception of some second-unit footage at LAX," said Ru-

binstein. "We shot it last summer at the busiest time for the airport. We worked around and through the airport's schedule. It's a lot busier than people realize. It's got a 10,000-ft. runway. A lot of commercial charter flights stop there to refuel going to and from Europe. Private charters go in there and during the summer Bar Harbour and the Maine coast are tourist areas.

"Early in the schedule, people were cursing me for dropping them in the middle of a working airport because most of the time producers run from airports because airports mean noise and noise screws up the sound. I felt that the aspects of shooting in the airport that Steve wrote it for, with a real airport, ultimately outweighed the inconvenience of having to wait for a plane to take off or having filming interrupted by planes landing. We had tremendous cooperation from the Bangor Airport Authority. They worked hard to help us.

"We actually had another L1011 that few and that was what we used for the landings and take-offs. That sat in the middle of the Bangor Airport for most of the summer. So people saw the big L1011 with the America Pride on the side.

"We are donating the plane to the state and the Bangor Municipal Airport and they are going to rent it as a set as a way of attracting film business to Maine. Aside from the creative aspects of shooting in Maine, Steve has always recognized that, compared to other states, Maine is economically depressed and any business he can help bring back to the state is a plus."

While the film was shot in his home state, King wasn't as involved in the project as he has been on some other films. As Rubinstein explained, "Steve and I have been partners for 15 years over a fairly substantial number of projects. We've worked out a rhythm of working together depending on the project. Obviously on *THE STAND* he was involved on a day-to-day basis, much more than on any other project that he's been on. He was probably on the set 25% of the time. In

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# King Effects

## COMPUTER GRAPHICS BY IMAGE DESIGN

*Rendering the titular monsters  
and flying an L1011 with CGI.*

By Dan Scapperotti

The job of bringing Stephen King's whirling balls of destruction, THE LANGOLIERS, to cinematic life fell to Image Design, a New York-based computer graphics facility. The company had done some work for THE STAND, including all the morphs of Jamey Sheridan's demon and the hand of god and chrome morphs. As visual effects supervisor, Tom Barham had a crew of six CGI animators, two model builders and several programmers on the project.

Working with a limited description of the Langoliers from the source material, Barham came up with several concept sketches and designs. When director Tom Holland approved an idea, a three-dimensional working model was created. "We built a model realizing that we could take it a lot further in CGI," said Barham. "The model served several purposes. It allowed the director to see a three-dimensional image of what the thing looks like and all of our animators and modelers get to look at it in three dimensions which enables them to interpolate that into a three-dimensional form on the computer."

The main Langolier design problem facing Barham and his staff was how to make them frightening without turning them into cartoons. "Initially we had some with faces on them," he said. "In as much as they were scary, they looked too much like Pac Man. That was a real caveat that was given to us by Laurel and, I think, by Stephen King, that they absolutely didn't want it to look like that. There was really no way of getting around that unless I started to divide the form into different sections. I did one that looked very futuristic. The arms looked like a sea creature. It was weird, but a little too sci-fi. It wasn't vicious enough. The way we approached it was that the Langoliers were princi-

pal characters, which in fact they were. They needed to have certain expressions to give them life, make them more visual, more frightening. We actually wanted to do rows of teeth like a shark," said Barham. "A kind of metallic teeth rather than something more natural, which would have been great for sound effects."

After director Tom Holland approved the design of the whirling balls of death and destruction, Barham broke down the effects scenes in the script, categorizing each to decide how to produce the effects. "We did a lot of production boards," said Barham. "Tom would block the scene and we would work together to figure out exactly how we were going to do the effects."

"We take the plates that we shot and we composite them on a digital compositing machine called FLAME," said Barham. "Then we take the green screen elements, the background element plates and the CGI elements and put them all together on FLAME. We also use another form of compositing on the SGI [Silicon Graphics] systems called ICE which is all digital compositing off computer."

The effects staff also faced the formidable task of destroying the Bangor Airport as the Langoliers ravage the area. The airport plates were shot from several different angles and a very large physical model of the

**The Langoliers chase Craig Toomy (Bronson Pinchot) as he runs toward the terminal. The challenge was to make the monsters frightening, not cartoony.**



**Image Design used Lockheed's original blueprints to digitize the film's L1011. Except for takeoffs and landings all shots of the plane were done CGI.**

terminal was built. They also used digital mattes to add mountains to the terminal background.

Except for take-offs and landings, all scenes of the American Pride plane in flight were completely computer generated. Lockheed, the plane manufacturer, gave Image some of the original blueprints. "Using those and some of the modeling done by Lockheed," noted Barham, "we were able to build an exact replica of the L1011, which is a huge model on a computer. The backgrounds are all real and we had to match the air-to-air photography on the existing cloud footage. We talked about shooting air-to-air, but it was cost-prohibitive. We talked about doing a model, but models look like models. We thought we could generate something on the computer that looked absolutely real."

Barham was satisfied with the time-rip effect used when the plane retraces its trail. "That worked pretty well," he said. "We used the same process as the Langoliers. That was a little different because we were kind of creating a moving abstract painting. Normally when you work in computers, you're building recognizable objects. Things that we all know. When we get into this area it becomes much more of an abstract thing." □

# CONGO

**Director Frank Marshall on filming the bestseller.**

*By Dennis Fischer*

In 1980, Michael Crichton published *Congo*, which combined the old lost civilization plot with Amy, a highly intelligent gorilla with advanced communicating abilities, and a group of scientists after some diamond chips for their computers. The project was optioned by executive producer Frank Yablans, but lay fallow for a long time.

Now Kennedy/Marshall Prods. and Paramount Pictures have united to create what is essentially a \$50 million H. Rider Haggard-style epic starring Dylan Walsh, Laura Linney, Ernie Hudson, Grant Heslov, Joe Don Baker and Tim Curry. The script is by John Patrick Shanley (*MOONSTRUCK*, *JOE VERSUS THE VOLCANO*) from Crichton's novel and script.

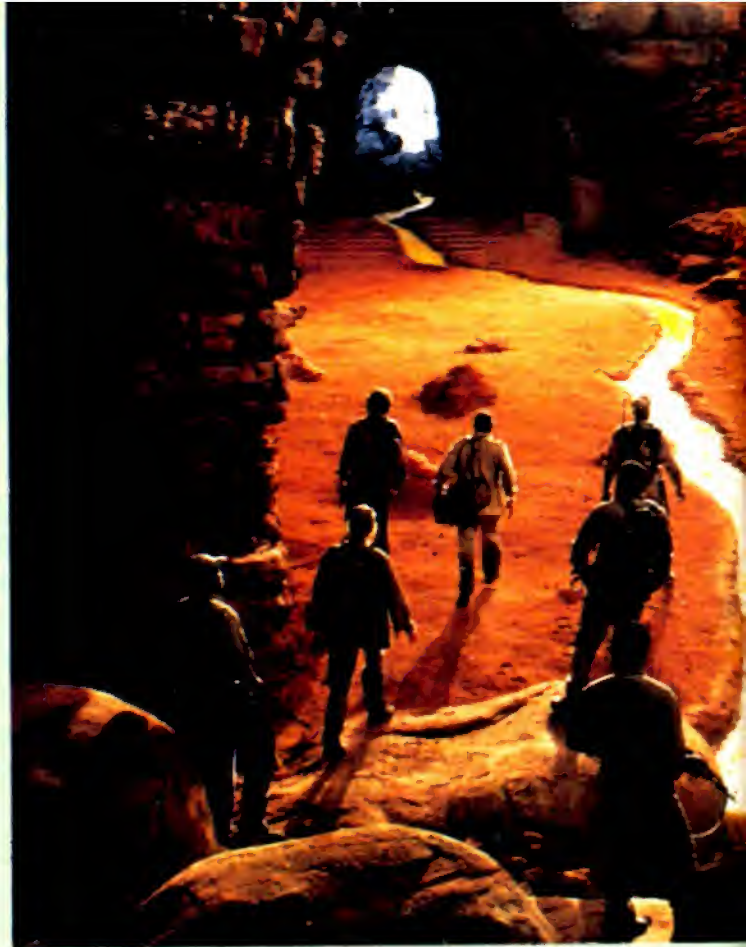
In it, primatologist Peter Elliot (Dylan Walsh) and TraviCom project supervisor Karen Ross (Laura Linney) become unlikely partners in a search for the legendary Lost City of Zinj. Peter is the guardian of Amy (makeup effects by Stan Winston), whom he wants to return to the wild, while Karen has been sent by TraviCom's CEO Travis (Joe Don Baker) to retrieve rare diamonds needed for new communication technology.

They are accompanied by "white hunter" type guide Monroe Kelly (black actor Ernie Hudson), Peter's colleague Richard (Grant Heslov), and mysterious philanthropist Homolka (Tim Curry). Surviving the dangers of the rain forest, including a hippo attack, they discover at last the city of Zinj,

and in the words of the ad copy, here man is the endangered species.

The film was shot in Los Angeles, Costa Rica, and Uganda, with enormous sets being constructed on the former MGM lot. The film was directed by Frank Marshall (*ARACHNOPHOBIA*, *ALIVE*), long-time Spielberg producer and second unit director, and is produced by him, his long-time partner and wife Kathleen Kennedy, and former Disney production executive Sam Mercer.

"It's an action adventure movie that I thought had a unique element to it, which is Amy the gorilla," said Marshall. "It was a combination of *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* and *JURASSIC PARK* in the sense that it had a lot of fantasy elements, the city of Zinj and the lost diamonds of King Solomon's mine, and then it had this technical side, the technology that Crichton always puts into his stories. I thought it was fascinating to have this ensemble of people going off into the jungle, not really know-



Discovering Crichton's Lost City of Zinj, seeking rare diamonds for technological innovation.

ing what they're going to find, and then there was the thriller aspect of the grey gorillas and the city, so it was a combination of genres in one story and a chance to create some really fun characters and deliver a summer entertainment, a summer popcorn movie that we all really love to go to in the summer. It was all of those things.

"It's a very attractive story for me," said Marshall. "I just really liked the story. I liked the idea of combining technology versus nature, and seeing that through all of these different characters, and then throwing in a gorilla that speaks in a sign language. So there was a challenge to me not only on the creative side, but also on the technical side and the producing side of trying to put together this movie that nobody could put together for 15 years."

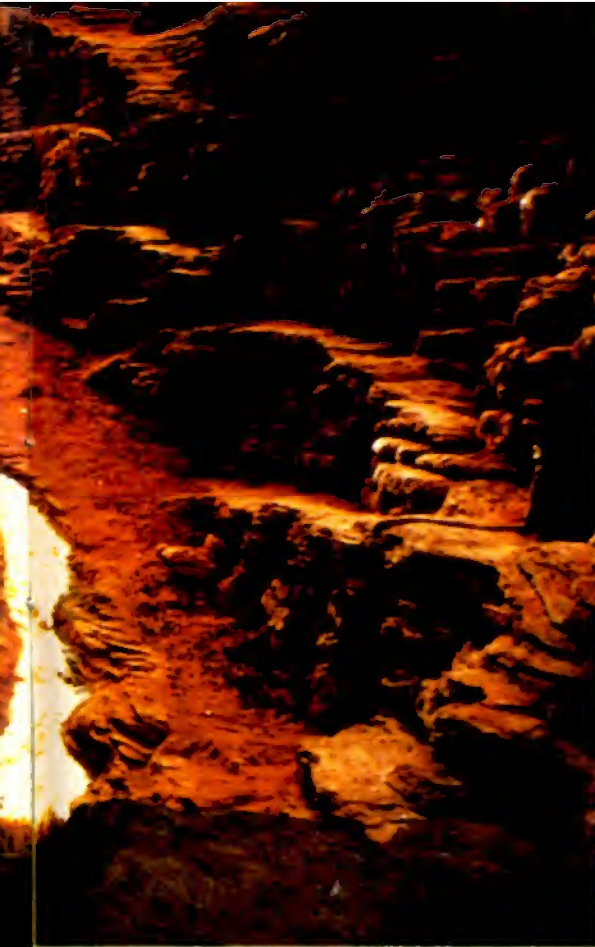
Marshall promises that the film will be full of humor and surprises, much like his earlier features as a director. He is particularly betting that audiences will fall in love with Amy, his lead gorilla. "Amy is fabulous," he proclaimed. "The key element of this movie is that Amy has to be an actress and deliver a performance, and she does that in spades. I think it's a *tour de force* for Stan Winston. We have some footage of real gorillas and you can't tell the difference. I'll defy anybody to tell me from shot to shot the difference."

Additionally, Marshall extolled the other characters in the film as well. "I think John Shanley has written some wonderful characters, and we have wonderful performances from Tim Curry, Dylan Walsh, Laura Linney and Ernie Hudson.

Stan Winston's Amy, an intelligent gorilla with the ability to communicate.







Filming the entrance to Zinj on cavernous sets at Sony Studios, designed by J. Michael Riva. Inset: Frank Marshall directs Dylan Walsh as primatologist Peter Elliot, updating novelist H. Rider-Haggard.

You've got all of these people with something to hide from each other coming together and then they've got to confess to each other in order to survive, they have to become one. So you have the intrigue of them all being suspicious of each other. Then they have to overcome something so they can make it out at the end. Shanley has written very unique characters for each one of the roles, and I think that's what distinguishes it from all the other action-adventure movies you see."

Marshall decided that the already quite expensive project couldn't afford five big stars, and having only one or two would unbalance the movie as a whole, so for his leads he chose two relative unknowns, Walsh and Linney, and supported them with talented character actors.

In explaining the changes made from Crichton's novel, Marshall said, "Obviously we had to update the technology from what it was at the end of the '70s. Amazingly enough, when you look at the book, he [Crichton] predicted a lot of things that came true on a technology front with computers. I felt that the goal in the original book, the consortium vying for the diamonds for defense reasons, was kind of an old cliché, so we came up with a new approach being communications, which is so important now with the Information Superhighway, so they are going to look for the diamonds' communications properties.

"We changed the name of the company from ERTS to TraviCom, which is named after the founder of the company played by Joe Don Baker, Charles Travis, and it's about communication and the reason they want the diamonds is because it turns out once again, borrowing from what Crichton does best, which is setting up something that could be true, if there was really such a

thing as a perfect, flawless diamond, you could rule the communications industry with a shopping bag full of them, according to the experts we spoke to."

These diamonds found at the base of a volcano are what compels the main characters to discover the lost city of Zinj which is guarded by a horde of mutated grey gorillas trained to kill all interlopers.

Marshall knows that with many movies out there vying for attention, it is important to have elements that make a movie different and stand out. He expects to give audiences some unexpected twists and has also added his trademark off-the-wall humor to the story.

"I love to have fun in movies," he said, "and I think we all like to have a laugh in movies, and I certainly have the characters who can do it in this one, so it's a lot like ARCHNAPHOBIA in the combination of thrills and chills and then some laughs that enable you to release the tension that's built up in the scarier scenes.

"These are really fun characters. Tim Curry's character is really wonderful and he has a lot of the comedy stuff, and it really pays off."

The physical effects of CONGO, including the after-effects of an exploding volcano, were handled by Michael Lantieri, while the visual effects have been done by Industrial Light & Magic. To jack up the climax, Marshall has combined the grey gorilla attack with the volcano explosion to place the characters in a double jeopardy situation.

The production experienced smooth sailing for most of its run, although it lost a week to constant rains in Costa Rica and has had its release moved up to early June. To meet that deadline, Marshall ran three units apart from his main unit, one in



Africa, one in Costa Rica, and one on the lot, while he was both co-producing and directing CONGO and simultaneously co-producing INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD. Additionally, the new digital editing technology offered by Lightworks he enthused has proved an invaluable asset in helping the mammoth production meet its deadlines.

Kennedy and Marshall were once an integral part of Spielberg's Amblin Productions, but have decided to strike out on their own. About the split, Marshall said, "It's nice to be your own boss. Kathy and I have always had an interest in making movies together, which is a very nice and very lucky situation for us, and we want to make two or three movies a year that we're really interested in and we really believe in. You're going to see lots of varied things because we're interested in many different genres, everything from very romantic love stories to animated adventures."

Kennedy/Marshall Productions has already optioned several works for the screen and is currently developing some animated films (THE THIEF OF ALWAYS and TRUMPET OF THE SWAN). "We've got MAP OF THE WORLD, HOPEFUL MONSTERS and SNOW CRASH, which is a terrific science fiction, cyberspace book, and RELIC," Marshall said. "We have a varied group of projects which are all in high gear to get scripts."

As a producer and second unit director

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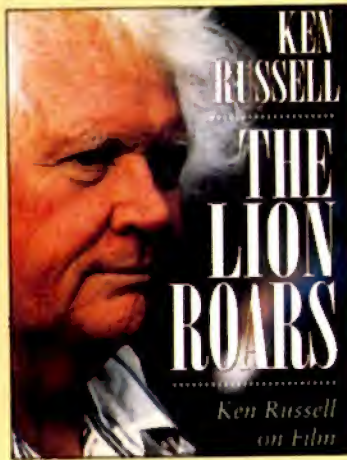
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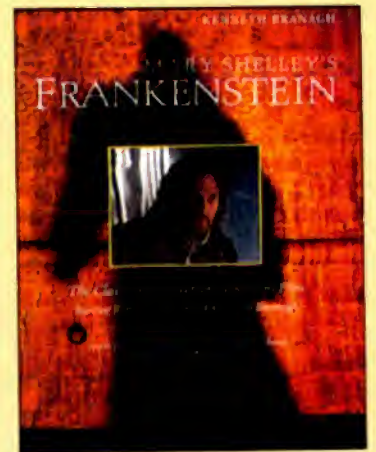
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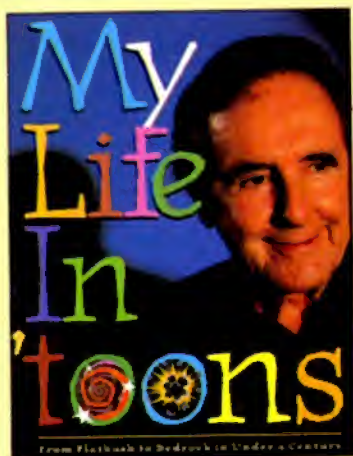
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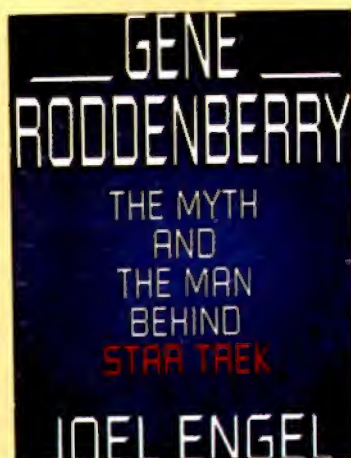
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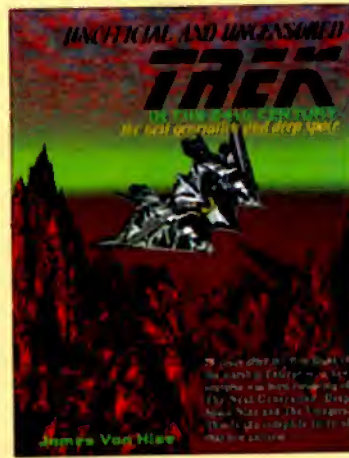
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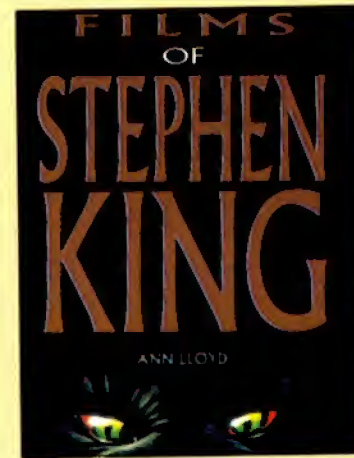
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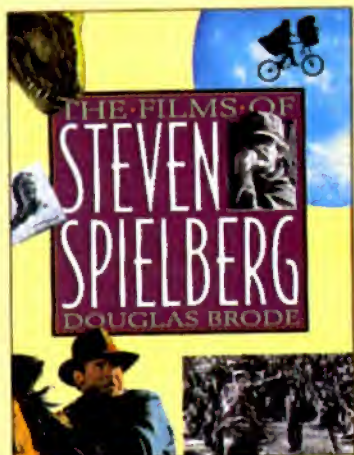
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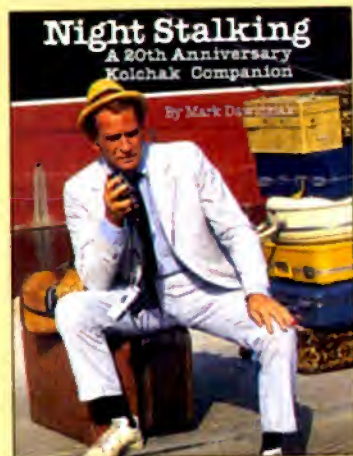
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## FILM RATINGS

- Must See
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Poor

### CARNOSAUR II

Directed by Louis Morneau. New Horizons Video. 2/95. 82 mins. With: John Savage, Cliff DeYoung, Rick Dean, Ryan Thomas Johnson.

In an attempt to compete with JURASSIC PARK, Roger Corman brought out CARNOSAUR (1993), which featured a "life" size T-Rex which was rather an embarrassment in terms of its limited movements and its failure to interact believably with the cast. After having seen JURASSIC PARK and apparently noting the raptors were the predator of choice, here comes CARNOSAUR II, where the man threat is (surprise) raptors. At first these are shown in quick cuts, making them appear reasonably threatening and believable. But eventually a little too much of them is shown, and they clearly betray the fact they are costumes with people inside. John Beuchler's team is responsible for the dinos once again.

Setting this time is a top-secret, underground government installation with computer problems. A team of hard-bitten computer service engineers is sent in to fix things. Anyone who has ever dealt with any computer repair men or systems engineers knows these are the nerdy people with the pocket protectors, so the idea of making them rugged macho types is really quite humorous. They have their work cut out for them because not only is the computer site sitting on nuclear waste and infested by raptors, but somehow the countdown has been set off to detonate nuclear warheads which are also stored in the underground installation.

Plot is low on action with the raptors not being seen for about 45 minutes. And then it comes virtually to a halt in the closing minutes when the T-Rex of the original film comes lumbering in for a fight with a fork lift. This is just a repeat from the first film and makes no sense dramatically because the whole place is about to blow and the big guy would be killed anyway.

● Judith Harris

### CIRCUITRY MAN II: PLUGHEAD REWIRED

Written and directed by Steve and Robert Lovy. Pay Per View. 1/95. 96 mins. With: Vernon Wells, Deborah Shelton, Jim Metzler, Nicholas Worth, Paul Wilson.

The sequel to CIRCUITRY MAN was made in 1993, but is just now surfacing on video and Pay-per-View TV. With much the same cast and many of the same characters, it continues the original film's ecological theme with a lot of the same quirkiness. But all the individual plot lines which meet at the end don't seem to add up to a particularly interesting story this time around. Emphasis on humor seems greater this time (the end credits list the film's medical advisors as Dr. Howard, Dr.



A derelict of Hobb's End in John Carpenter's *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS*, continuing the losing streak of the genre's most promising directors.

Fine and Dr. Howard) and cameos by standups Judy Tenuta and Tom Kenny are amusing but jarring.

Jim Metzler underplays the CIRCUITRY MAN role: He's a bioengineered gigolo and manages to stoically withstand head injuries, bullet wounds and arrow piercings with nary a limp or sign of blood. Vernon Wells is Plughead, insane and out to rule the world through the use of computer chips imbedded in the brains of the world's leaders who believe the chips will grant them longevity. Better than the characters or the plot, such as it is, is the ambience—a future world so polluted, oxygen has become a hot commodity ("oxy"): matter transporter is used only to move the mail and gasoline is so rare, motorized transport has almost disappeared. The film has been well cast, especially with Nicholas Worth, in love with a rock and Dennis Christopher in love with Traci Lords.

●● Judith Harris

### 8 MAN

Directed by Yasuhiro Horiuchi (Carl Macek, Eng. version). Fox Lorber Video. 2/95. 84 mins. With Kai Shishido, Etsushi Takahashi, Sachiko Ayashi.

The old saying of "something was lost in the translation" seems to apply to this English-dubbed Japanese-made live action version of a 1960's TV cartoon staple, 8TH MAN. Although the photography and production design are particularly good, the U.S. soundtrack suffers from rather unappealing voices and stilted dialogue (the clunky plot might have been present in the original version). Police detective Yokata, gunned down by gangsters, is resurrected as the robotic "8 Man" through the technical wizardry of Dr. Tani. 8 Man not only has to contend with the usual human/robot angst, he also has to fight gangsters and Dr. Tani's rebellious half-robot son, Ken. The special effects aren't especially impressive, mostly opticals and POWER RANGERS-level stunts. I liked the cartoon version more.

● David Wilt

### IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS

Directed by John Carpenter. New Line Cinema. 2/95. 94 mins. With: Sam Neill, Julie Carmen, Jurgen Prochnow, Charlton Heston, David Warner, John Glover.

Despite a very appealing TV promo, *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS* turned out to be a surprisingly dull film. Latest in a string of losers from director John Carpenter. Despite a couple of references to Lovecraft, namely slimy old gods trying to reclaim the Earth and a character named Pickman, this is about a writer more akin to Stephen King than Lovecraft, who was not spectacularly successful during his life and has achieved only cult status since his death.

Sam Neill fails to spark much sympathy as a jaded insurance investigator called in to find superstar author Jurgen Prochnow. Neill succeeds in locating the fictitious New England town of Hobb's End. But, rather than come to the logical conclusion the town inspired the books, he leaps to the bizarre idea the town was formed from them. Julie Carmen is either a terrible actress or has been badly directed; in any event, she disappears half-way through the film when her character is "written out" and it's not much of a loss.

Carpenter wisely keeps sight of KNB's monsters to a minimum, as they are far too rubbery to be convincing. After presenting its main theme that books can alter reality and reading them can bring on madness, Michael DeLuca's plot doesn't seem to have anywhere to go, so the ending just meanders.

● Judith Harris

### THE MANGLER

Directed by Tobe Hooper. New Line Cinema. 3/95. 105 mins. With: Robert Englund, Ted Levine, Daniel Mathmon, Jeremy Crutchley, Vanessa Pike.

*THE MANGLER* is just a great name for a horror movie and certainly I cannot be the only person in the world who has felt menaced by an inanimate piece of machinery. As in Stephen King's short story, which has been ex-

panded by a scriptwriting triumvirate, this film is about a demon-possessed industrial pressing machine. Even though this ironer has been effectively realized to be as much of a character as the human actors, it is still somewhat laughable in its locomotive hugeness and all the more so when it comes to life at the end and turns into something akin to a Warner Bros cartoon.

Long before then, however, the whole film is derailed by the serious miscasting of Ted Levine as the hero. Levine previously played the other serial killer in *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* and here, with his Martin Landau looks and Dustin Hoffman voice, he seems much more frightening than Robert Englund, done up in some interesting old-age makeup by David Miller. Most laughable of all is that Levine's next door neighbor (Daniel Mathmon) is not only an expert in the occult, with all the right books and charms to combat demon possession, but also just happened to work in a laundry, when he was in college, and is intimate with this very model of mangle. Quelle coincidence! There's a tedious subplot about all the high-class members of town sacrificing their daughters on their 16th birthday; and the ending is telegraphed well in advance. There is certainly more blood displayed in this film than I've seen in a long time, but it's beginning to look more and more that the chills and polish of *POLTERGEIST* really should be attributable to Steven Spielberg and not director Tobe Hooper. ● Judith Harris

### MR. PAYBACK

Directed by Bob Gale. Interfilm. 2/95. 20-25 mins. With: Billy Warlock, Christopher Lloyd, Leslie Easterbrook.

They've tightened up the Interfilm interactive auditorium system since it was last trotted out on a limited basis about two years ago. As before, each audience member gets a three-button control panel with which to control the on-screen action (majority rules). This time, though, options occur more frequently; a game-like point system has been added; the scripts have assumed today's viewers are tech-savvy enough not to need detailed instructions for each decision branch; and the entire presentation is salted through with peculiar, info-highway-style communiqués from the theatre's computer ("Mr. Payback meets all of his clients at this restaurant," reads one subtitle, for no plausible reason).

That's good news. The bad news is that the "film" (actually a blurry, video projection of a film) you're interacting with is so base, mean-spirited, and cheaply made that one begins to wish the Interfilm people had made room on their voting pads for one more button: a "stop" control. The title says it all: *BAYWATCH*'s Billy Warlock plays a bionic crimefighter (in this case meaning he's got a tacky-looking, flip-top finger) who metes out purportedly fanciful justice to bigots, sexists and corrupt politicians. Imagine an auditorium full of people shouting out their preferences (screaming is encouraged at the Interfilm presentation) as they're given

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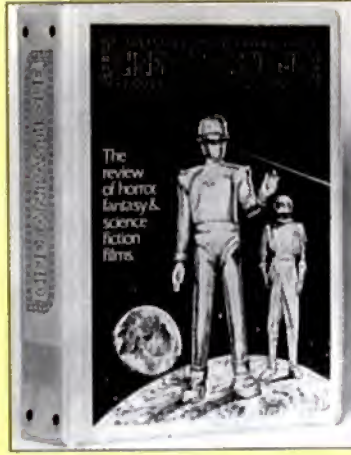
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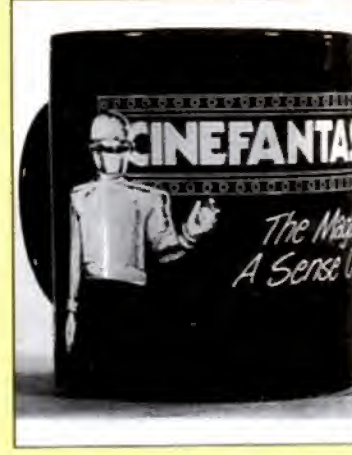
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the option of seeing a malefactor either smeared with fecal goo or tied up in doggy-girl bondage, and it becomes obvious where the appeal for this kind of thing lies. The Roman arena is alive and well and coming to a multiplex near you. The rating is for the improved voting system; the sub-Troma comedy wins only my contempt.

• Dan Persons

## THE SECRET OF ROAN INISH

Directed by John Sayles. First Look Pictures Release. 103 mins. With: Jeni Courtney, Eileen Colgan, Mick Lally, Richard Sheridan.

The rugged west coast of Ireland is the setting for John Sayles' magical tale of hope and redemption based on *Secret of the Ron Mor Skerry*, a novella by Rosalie Fry. Sayles has fashioned a simple tale of a young girl's search for Jamie, her missing brother, who, as an infant, was washed out to sea. The dark, foreboding skies that overhang much of the film, are no match for the brightness generated by young Jeni Courtney. As Fiona Connelly, the young actress brings hope to a family ravaged by tragedy and forced to abandon their home on the isle of Ran Inish. Sent to live with her grandparents, Fiona learns the legend of the Selkie, a half-seal, half-woman creature who once lived in the town and the meaning for her own life. With an almost surrealist touch, Sayles manages to evoke the spirit of films from a gentler time. It is myth, a natural part of life along the water's edge, that guides the story. The sea itself acts as both villain and savior, carrying off the baby but returning Fiona to the island to learn its se-

cret. A secret that will reunite the family and bring them back to their island home.

••• Dan Scapperotti

## TICKS

Directed by Tony Randel. Republic Pictures. 2/95. 85 mins. With: Rosalind Allen, Ami Dolenz, Peter Scarlari.

No real surprises, but this film contains some of the most lively and lifelike film monsters in years. Courtesy of Doug Beswick, the "ticks" of the title scuttle along walls and floors like hyperactive crabs, pop when exposed to flames, and leave a disgusting mess when squished. Put simply, the technical work on these critters is top-notch—in fact, virtually flawless (so what if the ticks look more like spiders and act like crabs).

The plot is not so amazing, but it is serviceable enough: a group of troubled teenagers (and their adult chaperones) unwittingly selects a marijuana-growing region for their wilderness outing. An herbal steroid concocted to speed up the pot plants has also given the local tick population a boost (but oddly, no other insects or animals are affected). A forest fire caused by some of the dope farmers not only traps the tourists in their cabin, it also causes a tick migration toward the campsite. Talk about bad luck!

With adequate acting, not too many illogical plot twists, and plenty of gross-out scenes (slimy, pulsating egg-sacs, tick-infested abdomens, squashed ticks) director Randel manages to maintain some degree of sus-

pense until the final, full-out tick rampage of the last 20 minutes. Given an excellent script rather than a routine one, this could have been a great film—but as it is, it's still entertaining. So where's TICKS 2? ••• David Wilt

## TOKYO BABYLON 1

Directed by Koichi Chigara. U.S. Manga Corps. 2/95. 52 mins. In Japanese with English subtitles.

Japanese animation has no shortage of plucky, young demon fighters, all of them female and all of them seemingly dressed for a day at bondage kindergarten. Subaru Sumeragi, protagonist of TOKYO BABYLON 1 and the latest in a 2000-year-old line of city-based mediums, is no exception to the rule. What separates BABYLON from its contemporaries, though, is director Koichi Chigara's keen visual sense—live-action directors should employ compositions as effectively—and his impressive flair for cutting. The collapse of a construction-site elevator sabotaged by a possessed, power-hungry executive—is as finely shaped a sequence as any seen in SPEED. While viewers could probably survive without the footage devoted to Subaru's shrill, comic-relief sister, the scenario is otherwise refreshingly free of familiar elements and is remarkably clear-headed about human passions and their costs—going all the way to featuring one victim who extracts her vengeance upon the executive with an act so heinous that it would be unforgivable in an American production. X-FILES-grade supernatural thrills—here's hoping future installments are as elegantly

crafted.

••• Dan Persons

## WATCHERS III

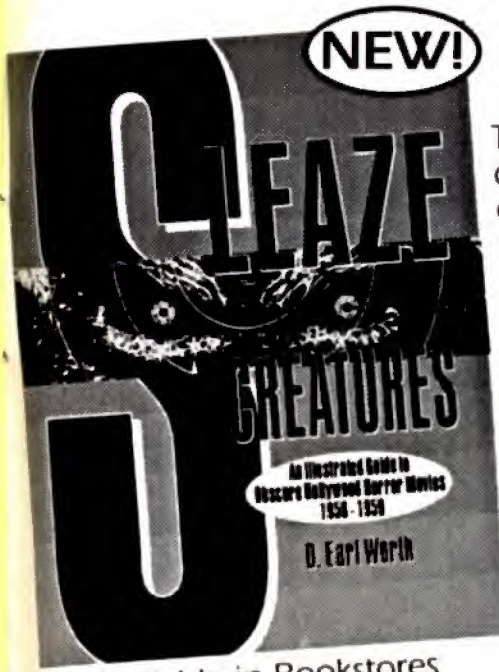
Directed by Jeremy Stanford. Concorde. 2/95. 79 mins. With: Wings Hauser, Gregory Scott Cummins, Daryl Roach, John K. Linton.

This must surely be one for the record books. Roger Corman has now made three films from the Dean Koontz novel, *Watchers*, within a comparatively short space of time (1988-94). All have contained the central kernel of Koontz' plot, which involves two genetically altered animals, one a super intelligent dog and the other a homicidal baboon. Only the second one was any good.

The setting in WATCHERS III has been transplanted to a Latin American country and consists of jungle warfare on a small scale. The dog is not given much to do except write "danger" with a stick in the dirt for the first half, which is actually just as well, because as soon as the dog meets Wings Hauser, the film turns into a totally laughable farce as Hauser has intelligent conversations with it and defers to its opinion and asks it for advice. Gabe Bartalos, who was responsible for the barely mobile MUNCHIE STRIKES BACK creature, here comes up with an even more wretched makeup for the genetically altered baboon called the Outsider. It's almost completely black and is wisely not shown very clearly, as it looks like a kid's homemade Halloween costume attempting to cross Swamp Thing with a Gremlin.

• Judith Harris

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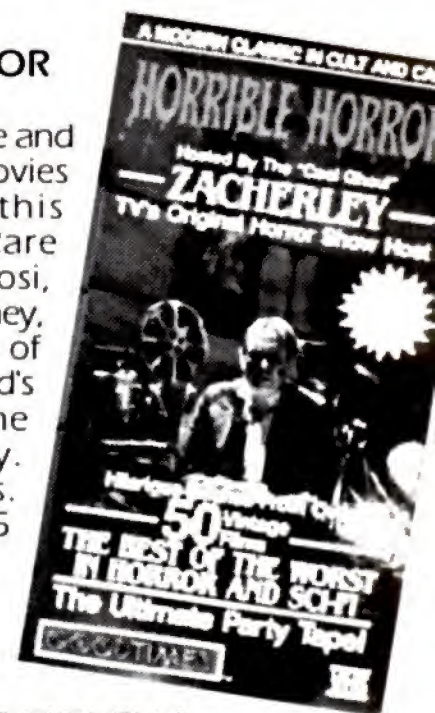
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## WATERWORLD

continued from page 9

Cameron's *THE ABYSS* (1989) notwithstanding, science fiction fans famished for genre entertainment will dive in eagerly the first weekend of release. Universal is praying the word of mouth from the hardcore crowd is ecstatic and the film breaks deep and wide, rolling in on the summer tide much as *Jaws* did back in 1975. But one senses an upstream struggle. Although the surprise success of *STARGATE* signals that quirky and imaginative science fiction can still find an audience, the '90s have not been kind to the genre. Arty gothic horror *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA*, *MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN*, Anne Rice's *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* has pushed aside earth-bound dystopia and alien monsters alike. Whether *WATERWORLD* turns out to rise like *TERMINATOR 2* or sink like *DUNE*, one can't help but root for this non-sequel, non-TV-inspired behemoth and admire the majestic lunacy in pumping enough money into it to float the Mexican peso. *WATERWORLD* may yet defy the skeptics and, like the Mariner's sleek trimaran, find safe harbor after a stormy passage through rough seas.

## WHITE DWARF

continued from page 11

creative component like Theodora van Runkel was extremely important for us to have on this show," said Wagner. "She created a look that no one else would be able to do. We were very lucky."

In reading the script it is easy to envision *WHITE DWARF* as a multi-million-dollar feature film rather than a two-hour television pilot. Wagner agreed. "It is a very complicated show. We have children, animals, special effects. It is insane what we are doing and for the amount of money have."

Despite the challenges, Wagner is obviously proud of this project. "I love the title of *WHITE DWARF*. We explain that it is a place governed by a White Dwarf star but metaphorically Neal (Driscoll) is a white dwarf. The fact that Winfield and C.C.H. Pounder are black wasn't something that was intentional, we loved them for the parts. It heightened the metaphor for me even more, though."

Winfield is also having fun. "We have all fallen under its spell," he said. "*WHITE DWARF* has gotten very real. It is a great place to spend the day. I think people will really like it if they have a chance to watch it."

## THE LANGOLIERS

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the context of *THE LANGOLIERS*, Tom Holland is an experienced director. Steve checked in. He's my quality control at the appropriate times as far as reading the first draft and reading the second, and having some conversations with Tom about this or that. And he watched the dailies for the first ten days or so in terms of the characters settling in. It was not a day-to-day involvement."

Although the *Langoliers* as described by King are something akin to beach balls with teeth, Rubinstein was well aware of King's vocal criticism of the monster in *IT* and wanted to be sure he was satisfied with the *Langoliers*. "I think he feels pretty comfortable with *THE LANGOLIERS*," said the producer. "It was a concern of his that this didn't come across the way that one did. We had the discussion as to whether to go in the direction of a live monster or to go with the computer-generated illusions. We felt that the computer-generated illusions texturally were very appropriate for this concept of pulling this out of your childhood fear of something both scary but a little bit cartoonish. Computer-generated effects take time.

Someone has got to program a tremendous amount of data on a one-time-only basis. It was a big mountain to climb."

## CONGO

continued from page 57

for many of Steven Spielberg's best films, Marshall is used to working with the best in the business and he's hired many of those key personnel to work on *CONGO*. "We've delivered a wonderful movie," he claims. "This is really pure entertainment. This movie is not trying to say something in the best way. We talk about nature versus technology, and nature always wins. You always think you can overcome things with technology, but nature always wins out. If there was a message in the movie, that's what it would be. But we're here to have fun and create some thrills and chills and have a good time at the movies."

## DREDD EFFECTS

continued from page 25

and every department has stayed on budget. You couldn't ask for more. I'd never heard of *Dredd* prior to budgeting it, nor was it something I decided to follow after I did the first time. Hey, the last comic book character I was involved with didn't do me any harm at all, did it? I'm certain this won't either!"

# LETTERS

## JUMPING OFF THE BAND WAGON

As a regular viewer of the Empire/Full Moon titles, I was interested to read your close-up on Charles Band (26:4), in which he explained his intention to continue with self-developed scripts.

While I wish him well in his endeavors, I cannot look forward with much enthusiasm to a product line that skirts the lower edge of mediocrity, with only occasional displays of creative excellence. This chronic mediocrity is almost completely the result of bad script-writing. Having been burned by the outrageous low quality of some of these scripts, I have become decidedly more wary and suspicious in my consideration of new Full Moon offerings.

If Charles Band looks to expand his viewing audience, he should desist from the contraction of our dramatic expectations.

Michael J. Dunn  
Auburn, WA 98001-9639

The current issue [26:4, Full Moon Video] of *Cinefantastique* restored my faith in your magazine. Many years ago you did a stunning issue on John Carpenter's *THE THING*, which got me hooked on your publication in the first place. Then, you started this love affair with *STAR TREK* that seemed to go on and on (is that a rabbit I see?). Frankly, reading stories about *STAR TREK* is about as interesting as watching a constipated basset hound. Please, more issues like your June 1995 edition. Dennis Fischer did a fine job of researching the productions of Full Moon.

I hope you cover *CONGO* in greater depth in the future.

Bill Munster  
Round Top, NY 12473

## JUMPING SHIP ON VOYAGER

Do me a favor—if you want to devote any more space to *STAR TREK* in any of its incarnations—start another magazine devoted solely to that so I don't have to put up with it anymore.

Tim Murphy  
S. El Monte, CA 91233-2143

I'm writing to express my disappointment with your coverage thus far of *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*, which I can only describe as appalling. Where is the in-depth

27-page preview you gave to *DEEP SPACE 9* when it was launched? All we've had so far is a couple of minor stories which have told us very little about the concept and nothing at all about the actors or their characters. I have just received the April edition in Sydney and there is nothing in that, nor is anything listed for the June edition, although I suspect there will be a large coverage of Full Moon Video productions. This, I would have thought, should be in *Imagi-Movies*, which was established to cover the low-budget films. [See John Thonen's editorial Vol. 1.] The bottom line is I have—reluctantly—been forced to buy other magazines to find out about *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* because my favourite, *CFQ*, hasn't done the job.

Ian Withers  
Allawah, Australia

[We won't be bridging the *VOYAGER* gap until our February 1996 issue, which hits newsstands December 15. That will be our annual *STAR TREK* double issue, with a season recap of both *VOYAGER* and *DEEP SPACE NINE*. We regret the delay, but *STAR TREK* turned down our overtures to do a preview issue like we did on *DEEP SPACE NINE*.]

## CAMPAIGN FOR KARLOFF

In January of 1994, we, the family of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney Jr., petitioned the US Post Office for the issuance of a stamp set honoring these three men of legendary cinema horror. To date, we have collected some 7,000 signatures with the help of a great many people and publications. The media has been marvelous in the coverage we've received.

It is a long, slow process, but about six weeks ago I spoke with someone in the Post Office who assured me our petition was definitely being considered. Since the Post Office is a business, it is, of course, interested in "after issue" sales of products. The more public interest and support we can show them, the better our chances and hopefully, the shorter the process.

Your readers may send their signatures of support to me, Sara Karloff, P.O. Box 2424, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270.

Sara Karloff  
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

## TOO EASY ON TREK

This is late, but better than...well, you know. I bought your December *STAR TREK* issue automatically, even though I knew Mark Altman's loss would be keenly felt. I guess I didn't fully appreciate how easy he made it look. His episode guide was always informative, provocative, and enlightening. Dale Kutzero's was none of the above; it offered only the same gut reaction dressed up as criticism I would expect from the average fan. The preponderance of one and four-star ratings should be a clue to the sensitivity of the barometer at work. The other features and especially the photography are all top-notch, but for \$11, I expect a little critical acumen (not to mention better spelling). Next time, I browse before buying.

John Allen  
Charlottesville, VA 22905

## ADVICE, WHILE WAITING FOR GEORGE

I would like to respond to Jim Patrick Buyer for his letter "Star Wars Fan Revolt" [April, 1995]. He's right, it has been over 10 years since the last *STAR WARS*

movie. Is anyone still interested? I don't know. The first one was an absolute classic, but sequels can be really dreary. I didn't think it was much fun to see Luke Skywalker getting his hand cut off or zapped with lightning bolts.

Another thing has me concerned: In the *Return of the Jedi* paperback, Ben Kenobi tells Luke, "Your father fell into a molten pit," which is obviously why he wears that now-infamous breath mask. I sincerely hope these scenes in the next movie won't be graphic and cause the film to get an unfriendly PG-13 rating. I'd also like to see more females in this story, too. How come Luke never got a girlfriend?

To compound this, I am also worried about George Lucas' and Steven Spielberg's collaboration on a fourth *INDIANA JONES* movie. The third film didn't exactly impress me. I'd have to think that the two most successful filmmakers are starting to repeat themselves. I guess that's what happens in Hollywood when you get paid big salaries.

James W. Marcell Jr.  
Cranston, RI

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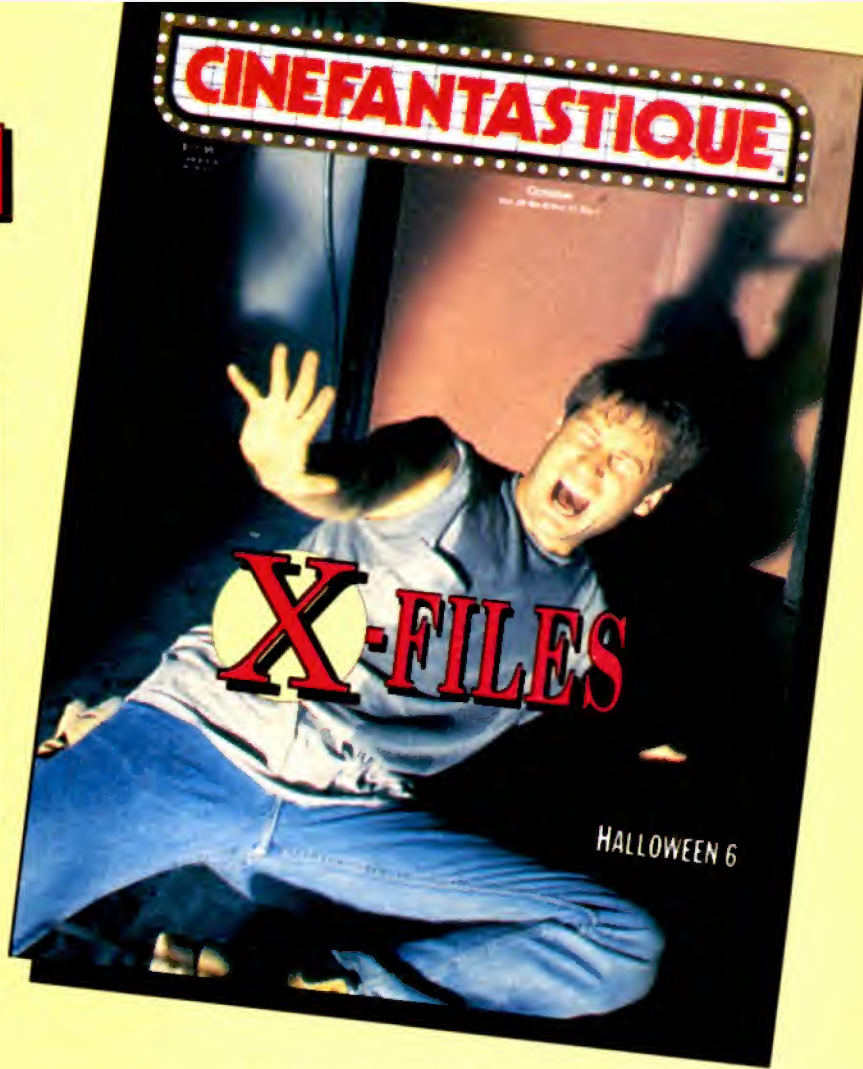
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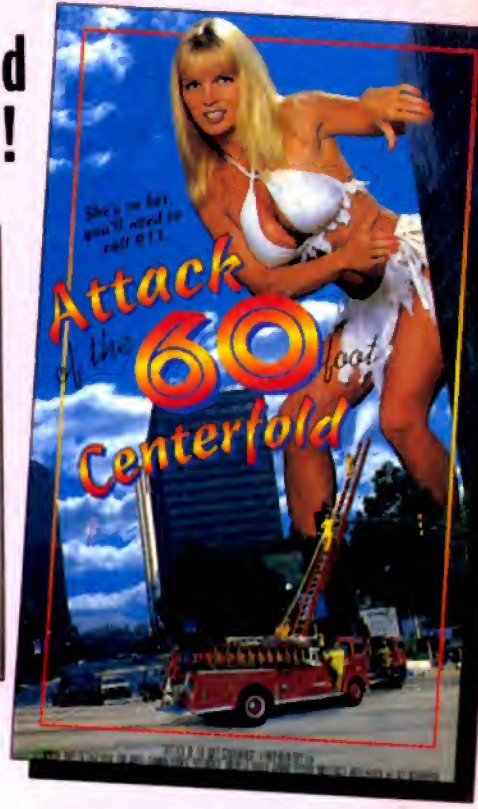
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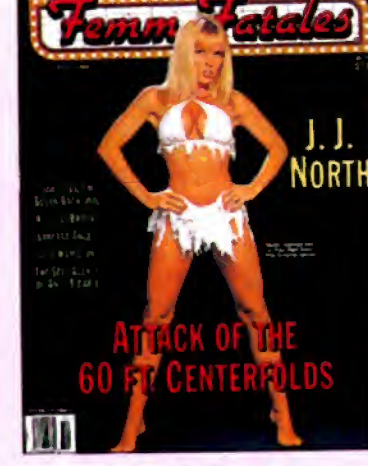
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